

Adoption of a Child in Abuja, FCT: Complete Guide to the Process, Requirements, and Costs

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Description

Adoption is a deeply rewarding process for many families in Abuja, providing a permanent home for children in need while offering couples or individuals the chance to expand their family.

Adoption in Nigeria is governed by the Child Rights Act of 2003, and the process is strictly monitored to ensure the best interests of the child.

Here is an in-depth guide to understanding the steps, requirements, and costs involved in adopting a child specifically in Abuja.

1. Eligibility to Adopt in Abuja

Before you begin the adoption process in Abuja, it is essential to ensure that you meet the legal requirements. These include:

- **Age**: Adoptive parents must be at least 25 years old and 21 years older than the child they intend to adopt.
- **Marital Status**: Married couples must adopt together, with both partners consenting.

- **Single Parents**: Single women can adopt children of any gender, but single men are generally restricted to adopting male children.
- **Residency**: Prospective adoptive parents must have lived in Nigeria for at least five years before applying for adoption.

2. Pre-Adoption Requirements

Prospective adoptive parents need to engage with the Social Development Secretariat in Abuja, which oversees child welfare and adoption matters.

You will be required to:

- Submit an application to the Social Development Secretariat.
- Undergo pre-adoption counseling to ensure you are emotionally and mentally prepared for the adoption process.
- Provide documents such as:
  - Birth certificates or affidavits of age.
  - Marriage certificates (if applicable).
  - Medical reports from a government hospital.
  - Proof of income or financial stability (e.g., bank statements, tax returns).
  - Passport-sized photographs.
  - Character references.

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The social welfare office may also require you to submit financial statements to demonstrate your ability to support a child. These documents serve as evidence of your commitment and capacity to provide a stable environment for the child.

3. Filing an Application with the Court

After receiving initial approval from the Social Development Secretariat, prospective adoptive parents must file an adoption application with the **Magistrate Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)**.

Step 1:

- Visit the Family Court at Magistrate Court Wuse Zone 2 for your commencement letter. Submit to the family court all listed documents below.

Documents to Submit to the Court:

1. Two (2) Recent Passport Size photographs.
2. Marriage Certificate (For Couples).
3. Medical Certificate of Fitness from a Government Hospital (original Copy).
4. Letter of Consent(s).
5. Evidence of Indigeneship (from LGA or State Liaison Office).
6. Evidence of Income (3 current months).
7. Three Referees.
8. Court Affidavit.

Step 2:

- Collect the Adoption Form from the child department and submit the form along with all listed documents to the **Mandate Secretary's Office** at the Women Affairs Secretariat of the Social Development Secretariat.

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4. Home Study and Investigation

Once the court has received your application, a home study will be conducted by a social worker. This is one of the most important stages in the adoption process, as it helps assess whether your home environment is safe, loving, and suitable for raising a child.

The home study involves:

- In-depth interviews with the prospective parents.
- Assessing the physical living conditions of the home.
- Speaking with other family members or residents of the household.
- Reviewing references from individuals who can vouch for the parents' character and ability to care for a child.

During this period, a guardian ad litem may be appointed by the court to represent the interests of the child.

5. Matching and Fostering Period

Once the home study is complete and you receive approval from the court, the Social Development Secretariat will match you with a child. The child is then placed in your care for a fostering period of at least six months. This allows the social welfare office to monitor how well the child adapts to your home environment and how well you are adjusting to

parenthood. Regular visits from social workers during this period ensure the child's well-being.

6. Finalising the Adoption

At the end of the fostering period, the social welfare officer will submit a detailed report to the court. If everything is satisfactory, the court will issue an adoption order. This legal document officially transfers parental rights to the adoptive parents and allows you to apply for a new birth certificate, listing you as the child's legal parent.

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7. Cost Breakdown for Adoption in Abuja

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The cost of adopting a child in Abuja can vary depending on several factors, including legal representation and required documentation. Below is a summary of the typical costs involved:

Item	Description
Documentation Fees	Costs for preparing and submitting required documents
Meeting Fees	Expenses for meetings with legal advisors, social workers, and stakeholders
Court Appearance Fees	Costs for attending court hearings and filing paperwork
Advisory Fees	Fees for legal counsel and guidance throughout the process
Secretarial Fees	Costs for administrative tasks (paperwork, communication)
Professional Fees	Charges for services of professionals (social workers, legal advisors)

Total Estimated Cost:

- **Total Cost Range:** ₦1,500,000 to ₦2,500,000

Conclusion

Adopting a child in Abuja involves a structured process aimed at ensuring the child's best interests are safeguarded. From the initial application to finalising the adoption order,

each step is designed to evaluate the suitability of the prospective parents while protecting the child’s well-being.

Although the process may be lengthy and the costs significant, adopting a child offers the chance to provide a loving and permanent home to a child in need.

Before embarking on this journey, it is important for prospective adoptive parents to ensure they are emotionally, financially, and legally prepared for the challenges ahead.

Seeking guidance from legal professionals and social workers can help make the process smoother and more efficient.

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