

# HOW TO ADOPT A CHILD FROM PAKISTAN

## ADOPTION FACTS

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ADOPTION

#### 1. About Adoption

#### 2. What Islam says about Adoption?

#### 3. Adoptive Breastfeeding

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#### **1. About Adoption**

Adoption is the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent or parents other than the birth parents. Adoption results in the severing of the parental responsibilities and rights of the biological parents and placing of those responsibilities and rights onto the adoptive parents. After the finalization of an adoption, there is generally no legal difference between biological and adopted children, though in some jurisdictions, some exceptions may apply.

Adoptions occur for many reasons. Many children are placed for adoption as a result of the biological parents' decision that they are unable to adequately care for a child. In some countries, where single motherhood may be considered scandalous and unacceptable, some women in this situation make an adoption plan for their infants, whereas others may come under financial, societal or family pressure to choose adoption. In some cases, they abandon their children at or near an orphanage, so that they can be adopted. In some cases and some cultures, a parent or parents prefer one gender over another and place any baby who is not the preferred gender for adoption.

The main reason for adoption varies from one country to another, depending largely on social and legal structures. The inability to reproduce biologically is a common reason. Some couples or individuals adopt children even though they are fertile. Some may choose to do this in order

to avoid contributing to perceived overpopulation, or out of the belief that it is more responsible to care for otherwise parent-less children than to reproduce. Others may do so to avoid passing on inheritable diseases or out of health concerns relating to pregnancy and childbirth. Some believe that it is an equally valid form of family building, neither better nor worse than the biological route.

The majority of Americans are personally affected by adoption.

6 in 10 Americans have had personal experience with adoption.

In 2005 alone, U.S. families adopted over 22,700 children from other countries.

The majority of internationally adopted children are young.

In 2004, 40 percent were under 1 year of age and an additional 45 percent were between the ages of 1 and 4.

Adoptive families are different; find a way to celebrate this difference.

Adoption is forever! Adoption is a lifelong commitment and unification of two families.

Adoption is not the 2nd best! It is a loving and accepting way to build a family.

Adoption is permanent, and you are the parents.

## **2. What Islam says about Adoption?**

There are often misconceptions about the role of adoption in Islam. The fact is that the Islamic form of "adoption" is called kafâla, which literally means sponsorship, but comes from the root word meaning "to feed." It is best translated as "foster parenting." Algerian family law defines the concept thusly: "Kafala, or legal fostering, is the promise to undertake without payment the upkeep, education and protection of a minor, in the same way as a father would do for his son".

It is very much encouraged in Islam to look after the orphan and there are many authentic hadiths [*sayings and action of the Prophet (PBUH)*] on the subject:

There is a great blessing and reward in taking care of orphans. In the Qur'an the Believers are urged again and again to take care of the orphans. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, "I and the guardian of an orphan will be in Paradise or Jannah like these two fingers and he joined his two fingers." (*Reported by al-Bukhari*)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The best house of Muslims is one where an orphan is cared for." Another hadith states that Jannah is fard or wajib (obligatory) on the one who cares for an orphan. In another Hadith he mentioned that "when a person puts his hand of compassion on the head of an orphan, for every hair (that his hand touches) of that orphan he will receive a blessing from Allah." (*Reported by Ahmad*)

In many passages the Quran also encourages looking after the poor and the orphans:  
"They ask you what they should spend. Say: whatever you spend of good must be for parents and kindred and orphans and the poor who beg and the wayfarers, and whatever you do of good deeds, truly Allah knows it well." (2:215)

Some of the confusion centers around the issues of changing the child's name or the inheritance of money. Addressing such issues, Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, former President of the Islamic Society of North America, states:

"May Allah bless you and reward you for your concern to help those who are in need. I strongly recommend that you take care of the orphans. As far as adoption is concerned, I can say that according to the Shari'ah it is not allowed to deprive a child of his/her biological parents' name. You can keep the child, provide him/her good home and take good care of him, but do not give him/her your last name. Allah says in the Qur'an, "He (Allah) has not made your adopted sons as your sons. Such is only your speech by your mouths. But Allah tells you the truth and He shows you the right way. Call them by the names of their fathers, that is more just in the sight of Allah. But if you do not know their fathers' names, call them your brothers in faith or your friends. There is no blame on you in whatever mistakes you made in this matter, but what counts is the intention of your hearts. Allah is oft-Forgiving and most Merciful." (Al-Ahzab: 4-5)

In US for the purpose of tax-exemptions, health insurance, school admissions etc. you may need to give the adopted child your last names. Such names can be provided with a clear understanding that you are only the guardians. The orphan children should be told about the names of

their real parents. In your own home you and your children should be aware of this fact that these children are not your biological children and you are not their biological parents.

It stands to reason that when those orphans grow up then they will not be mahram (unmarriageable) to you, to your spouse and to your own sons and daughters. They will also not inherit anything from your property unless you give them something as a special gift through the provision of will."

The following articles and responses to questions regarding adoption illustrate the Islamic position on adoption of orphans or abandoned children in Islam.

Read an Article on **Islamic Law and Adoption in Pakistan** by Zafar Iqbal Kalanauri on <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?shva=1#inbox>

Read a **Fatwa on Islam's Stance on Adoption**

Another view on **Adoption in Islam**

**What Future for Muslim Orphans? An Overview**, by Hwaa Irfan on [islamonline.net](http://islamonline.net)

Read more about **what Islam says for Adoption**

### **3. Adoptive Breastfeeding**

The mahram issue is one that has prevented many childless Muslim couples to pursue the adoption of orphaned or abandoned children. Fortunately, through the means of breastfeeding a child by the woman care-giver a mahram relationship is formed between her, her immediate family i.e. mother, father, brother, sisters, daughters, and sons whatever the case may be. If a child is breastfed by the woman until the child has gotten his full or even a drop according to some scholars while he/she is under the age of two years old then a mahram relationship is established. This is based on the Quran and sunnah (way) of the Prophet peace be upon him.

Through modern science it is possible for an adoptive mother that has never been pregnant to breast feed her baby, thus giving the baby a mahram relationship with the rest of the family. This should put many adoptive couple at ease with the mahran issue.

There are many sources of information regarding this issue. Listed below are some helpful websites.

<http://www.kellymom.com/bf/adopt/index.html>

<http://fourfriends.com/abr/index.html>

<http://forums.adoption.com/breastfeeding-adopted-child/>

<http://www.lalecheleague.org/NB/NBadoptive.html>

<http://www.adopting.org/adoptions/adoptive-breastfeeding-2.html>

<http://www.asklenore.info/index.html>

The "asklenore" website is particularly helpful in giving step by step directions to induce lactation through the use of medication, breast pumps, and sometimes herbs.

Also if one takes care of a child as a custodian or guardian and wants to write something for that child in his/her will, then one is allowed to do that within one third of his/her estate. One is allowed to give up to one third of one's wealth to any charity or to anyone who would not receive any share of the inheritance otherwise.

And Allah knows best may He guide us all on the straight path. Ameen.

#### **4. Who can adopt from Pakistan?**

Eligibility requirements for Pakistani adoption are noted below:

- The adoptive parents have to be a Muslim (unless the agencies know they are placing a Christian Child, they would not place a child with Christian family);
- At least one of the parents must be of Pakistani origin and be eligible for a NICOP or CNIC;
- Couples must be married for at least three years;
- For a single man/woman, although the law does not prohibit adoption, it is not very common and may be more difficult; and
- At least one of the prospective adoptive parent must be a citizen of the country of residence (i.e. America, Canada, UK, etc.).

NOTE: For persons residing outside Pakistan, please check with immigration authorities of your respective country to determine eligibility to adopt from Pakistan.

## **PAKISTAN ORPHANAGES**

### **LIST OF PAKISTAN ORPHANAGES**

#### **1. Edhi Foundation**

#### **2. Anjuman Kashana-e-Itfal-o-Naunehal**

#### **3. SOS Children's Village of Pakistan**

#### **4. HOPE**

#### **5. Didar Karim**

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#### **1. Edhi Foundation**

**Edhi Foundation** is one of the most commonly used orphanages for adoption simply because they get more abandoned or orphaned children than any other organization and the wait time to get a referral is much less than others (typically three to four months.)

Mrs. Bilquis Edhi personally handles the adoptions and prefers that overseas families designate a local contact in Karachi to periodically visit the center and call her office to check on the application status. Mrs. Edhi also asks for periodic updates after she places a child with a family.

Typically, Edhi places babies that have been abandoned or left in their care, to childless adoptive couples. Once a child is placed, Edhi Foundation requires adoptive parents to get a complete medical checkup of the child so they can be certain that the child is the right fit for them. Babies tend to be underweight due to poor prenatal care but in the majority of cases, the children quickly catch up with their peers under loving parental care.

The Edhi Foundation has in the past required a three-month waiting period between the time of the placement of the child and when they relinquish release forms about the child that will allow one to proceed with getting a birth certificate and gaining guardianship, but more recent adoptions have involved shorter waiting periods. This is something to consider if there is a strong time constraint on staying in Pakistan for an extended period to care for the child. However, Mrs. Edhi does allow applicants to assign an individual to care for the child in their absence to meet the waiting period requirement. Mrs. Edhi needs to be informed about the individual in advance of any child placement.

An article on Edhi foundation can be viewed at <http://www.dawn.com/weekly/review/archive/040506/review7.htm>

Below is a list of Edhi Adoption Centres in Pakistan.

Bilquis Edhi Adoption Centre		
Karachi	c/o Edhi Foundation Rangila Street Boulton, Market Mithadar, Karachi 74000	Mrs. Bilquis Edhi Ph: 92-21-242-4125 Ph: 92-21-241-3232 Fax: 92-21-241-8753

## 2. Anjuman Kashana-e-Itfal-o-Naunehal

Kashana gets fewer babies and therefore the waiting period could be up to two years. They require the adoptive mother to visit their center daily for a week to learn to care for the child placed with her and based on their assessment, they provide their release, which allows one to proceed with getting a birth certificate and guardianship order.

A doctor immediately checks babies that are handed over to Kashana. They are not put up for adoption if there are serious health concerns about the baby or the baby is severely underweight. The staff at Kashana works to bring the baby's weight up to a certain standard, and provide treatment to fix the health issues. In any case, they do not put the baby up for adoption before he/she is at least 3 months old.

They carefully select the couple which they think would be most suitable to raise the baby. They try and "match" the baby with the parents. They

believe that this helps the baby to better adjust in the family. Once they think there is a good match, they contact the parents.

The babies are housed in a peaceful nursery with usually three or four attendants. The prospective mother is asked to come to the nursery every day for a week, where she is "trained" to take care of the baby. A separate area complete with a crib is kept aside for this training. The mother learns to clean the baby, feed, change and give the baby a bath.

After the week of training, the baby is taken home. One has to appear with the baby in front of the board at Kashana and there is a formal handing over ceremony with much cheering and blessings for the baby.

Typically, Kashana does not give another child for adoption to a couple who already has one. The reason is the tremendous number of applications they have and the limited number of babies they get. Additionally, they do not hand over the baby to a relative of the adoptive parent. They will inform the parents and wait until the child is picked up by the parent themselves.

In order to apply, one parent has to go and meet Mrs. Isphahani, present their case and fill out the application. One has to fill the application, give a copy of a nikah nama and a photograph of the adoptive couple. Later, a home study and a statement of finances are submitted.

Read an article on Kashana

at <http://www.dawn.com/weekly/review/archive/031120/review9.htm>

Anjuman Kashana-e-Itfal-o-Naunehal		
Karachi	Survey No. 8/3, Stadium Road, Karachi 74800	Ph: 92-21-493-2828 Ph: 92-21-494-1553

### 3. SOS Children's Village of Pakistan

Like Kashana, SOS gets very few newborns and they do not adopt out older children that are placed with them. When they get a newborn child for adoption, they give the child to the adoptive family or their designated representative right away. Once they have the child, they call the applicant's Pakistani contact. If someone cannot come and pick up the baby right away, they contact the next person on the list.

SOS is not very keen on giving babies to couples who already have a child, but sometimes they make exceptions.

A list of various SOS centers throughout Pakistan is provided below.

SOS Children's Village of Pakistan -		
Lahore	Ferozpur Road, Lahore 54600	Ph: 92-42-586-6546 Ph: 92-42-585-4416 Ph: 92-42-583-9644 Ph: 92-42-585-2377 <a href="mailto:national@sos.org.pk">national@sos.org.pk</a>

#### 4. HOPE

Contact of HOPE is provided below.

HOPE		
Karachi	5 Amir Khusro Road, "Mehvush" Overseas Co-op Housing Society, Block 7/8, Karachi, Pakistan	Dr. Mubina Agboatwalla Mr. Tariq Niazi Dr. Khalid Omer Mr. Saad Amanullah Khan Ph: 92-21-453-9393 Ph: 92-21-223-9930 Ph: 92-21-431-0402 Fax: 92-21-452-0464

#### 5. Didar Karim

Contact of Didar Karim is provided below.

Didar Karim		
Vancouver, Canada		Didar Karim Ph: 1-604-986-6111 <a href="mailto:didar@lonsdalequayhotel.com">didar@lonsdalequayhotel.com</a>

#### LIFE AFTER ADOPTION

## **PROCESS FOR ADOPTING A PAKISTANI CHILD**

Though the process of adoption in Pakistan is the same, the requirements for international adoption varies between countries.

Step-by-step guidance on the process to adopt a Pakistani child is provided for the residents of following countries, listed in alphabetical order.

### **United Kingdom - UK**

### **United States of America - USA**

## **TELLING A CHILD HE/SHE IS ADOPTED**

It is a good idea to tell a child that he or she is adopted from the very beginning in age appropriate ways. It is important for them to know that they are loved and cherished long before they "accidentally find out" from someone other than the parents that they were abandoned at birth. Often that may mean you tell them their adoption story long before they are able to comprehend what it really means.

Adoption is a beautiful choice for building a family, it is to be celebrated, and not hidden or apologized for. It helps to build a sense of community with other adoptive families so the child has their own network of friends whose families came to be in ways similar to their own. Since most adoptions from Pakistan are "closed" and there is no information on the birthparents in most cases, the children may feel a sense of loss or lack of identity as a result later in life. As adoptive parents we can help them work through those feelings by being patient, understanding, and loving as they deal with these issues.

Taking the children back to visit the orphanage/placement agency, sharing pictures and stories that say "how lucky we are to have you in our lives", all help to make a child more secure in their relationship with their adoptive parents, and less prone to an identity crisis due to the fact that they are adopted.

### **Excerpt From Parents Who Have Adopted**

Zain is worth it! When he smiles, we forget about all our hardships. Zain is so special! I am not sure if you remember, my in-laws and for some extent my parents resisted the idea of adoption. They wanted us to continue with treatments etc. But now, they can't stay away from him. He has won every

member of our family over. He has made us closer and stronger as a family. He is truly a blessing. Adoption is a beautiful thing..... *Rashid & Shazia, 2006*

Noor is the light of our eyes, and the joy of our lives! She has brought love and happiness of immeasurable proportions into our family. She has been the catalyst for bringing joy to not only our family, but of hundreds of others, by opening up the possibility of adoption for many families after they get to know us and hear about our wonderful adoption experience. My father said, "I did not know how to love, she taught me", everyone tells me, "she is the happiest child they have ever come across" and "how lucky we are to have a delightful child like her"! ..... *Sarah and Wally, 2004*

When I first met our son, I had so many different thoughts and feeling running through my head. I was HAPPY beyond belief. I finally had my own baby to hold! but I also was saying in my head, "who is this baby?, I don't even know him, what he likes, how he wants to be held, why is he crying?, "I don't know how to care for him", "I have no Idea what I'm supposed to do!" My mother in law and sister in law were a big help!. What really helped was when I confided this to my sister in law, she told me "I felt the same way after I gave birth to my first baby!" So this was really reassuring to me!. You might fall in love at first sight but don't be surprised if it takes time to bond with your baby. that bond might start right from the first moment that you hold him and you feel like a mother, or it might take time, but boy I tell you, when that bonding happens, nothing can keep you apart! It gets stronger and stronger every day, the first time he looks in your eyes and you realize that you are his whole world! the first time his tiny hand wraps around your finger and won't let go! the first time he says "mama"! , the first time he runs into your arms!, the first time he says "I love you Mommy!" and on and on. So I think this is true for many mothers. To end, here is an adoption poem that I love, It says it all.

I didn't give you the gift of life  
but in my heart I know  
The love I feel is deep and real  
As if it had been so.  
For us to have each other  
Is like a dream come true  
No, I didn't give you  
The gift of Life  
Life gave me the gift of you. .... *Anonymous*

The adoption process had its difficult moments but my fears about not loving my child were quickly overcome as soon as I looked into Zane's big brown eyes. He is our entire world and we just wish we came to this decision earlier but we also know that everything has a time and place for it to happen and we were given the blessing of parenthood exactly when we were intended to ..... *Anonymous*

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **FAQs**

1. **How long does it take to adopt a child from Pakistan?**
2. **I am in the US wanting to adopt a child from Pakistan, where do I start?**
3. **Can the Application with Edhi be filed before we get an I-600A approved?**
4. **How would we move forward after doing the home study and I-600A form to actually get a baby?**
5. **How does Edhi determine the interest and commitment of an adoptive family?**
6. **Once in Pakistan, do you choose a baby or does a baby somehow get assigned to you?**
7. **The State Dept. document stated that the I-600 could be filed in Islamabad. Is there a consulate in Karachi these days that can accept the application?**
8. **Does Edhi typically place newborns? If so, is there an additional wait to get a newborn child? (I can't imagine they have enough newborns at any one time).**
9. **How much is the typical cost for the entire process, including expenses there and here (for families adopting and bringing**

children to US)?

- 10 Are the babies in Pakistan healthy? If moms are living in poverty, do they have adequate nutrition and prenatal care?
- 11 Once we get a baby, what is the paper work that needs to be done in Pakistan?
- 12 I am interested in adopting a child orphaned by the October 8, 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Are these children available for adoption?
- 13 Any other advice to help expedite the process in Pakistan?
- 14 When is the best time to let a child know they are adopted?
- 15 How can I adopt a relative child from Pakistan?
- 16 What is the process for adopting a child for persons residing in Pakistan?
- 17 How can I get guardianship decree from Pakistan court while staying in US?
- 18 Is it important to have a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) to make our child's CRC/CNIC, as I think for overseas Pakistanis the requirement is just NICOP?
- 19 Can you guide me about the induced lactation? How long does it take, what medicines are involved?
- 20 Do you need an appointment to file the I-600 in Islamabad or do you just show up?
- 21 How long does it take from the time you file the I-600 in Islamabad to the time that you are given a visa appointment?
- 22 Is this right that you need to file the I-600 BEFORE you can make an appointment with the doctor?

- 23 Can you go home as soon as the child gets the visa or do you need to hang around Pakistan for something else?  
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- 24 How does the Power of Attorney works for adoption in Pakistan?  
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- 25 I am still uncertain whether it is better to file the I600 locally vs. Islamabad?  
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- 26 Do we need to take original documents with us to Pakistan or only Notarized copies?  
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- 27 Is ther an "expiration" date on Home Studies?  
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- 28 Is a single women able to adopt from Pakistan?  
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- 29 How long does it normally take to get the court order of guardianship (or judges letter)?  
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- 30 Our adoptive child will be non-mahram. How can we induced lactation to address this issue?  
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- 31 What does Islam says about inheritance and an adoptive child?  
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- 32 Can I adopt my niece/nephew/relative?  
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- 33 Can I adopt an older child?  
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- 34 How can I help earthquake orphans?  
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- 35 What if I do not have a local contact in Pakistan?  
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- 36 Should I tell the child the truth about adoption?  
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- 37 We are not Muslim. Can we still adopt from Pakistan?

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- 38 I and/or my spouse converted to Islam. Can we still adopt from Pakistan?
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- 39 Do I need a NICOP card for the adoption or will a CNIC or POC card suffice?
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- 40 How can I get more involved with Pakistan Adoption?
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- 41 What is the best time to call Mrs. Edhi?
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- 42 Everytime we call Edhi Foundation, someone named Almas answers the phone. Who is she and can she help us?
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- 43 Does the No Objection Authority Letter need to be translated into English?
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- 44 We live in a rented, one bedroom apartment. Will this affect our adoption?
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- 45 How frequently should I update on orphanage on the progress of my child?
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- 46 How long does it take to adopt?
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- 47 How much does it cost to adopt?
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- 48 I will be staying at a hotel while I am in Pakistan. Can I give this address to the orphanage?
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- 49 Can we adopt privately?
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- 50 What is the legal definition of an orphan?
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- 51 We have a baby available but do not have any of the paperwork done. What do we do?

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  - 52 We can not go to Pakistan for the adoption process. What are our options?
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  - 53 How often should we call Edhi to show how interested we are in adoption?
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  - 54 Does Edhi accept faxed applications? Do they require an original signature?
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  - 55 If and when we get the call for the baby and if my husband is unable to go, will I need to get the power of attorney from him?
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  - 56 What is the best and safest way to take money to Pakistan for the adoption, lawyers, medical check-ups, etc.? And how much is enough?
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  - 57 I have heard that all return travel for US international adoptions must go through JFK airport only. Is this true?
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  - 58 What is the best and safest way to take money to Pakistan for the adoption, lawyers, medical check-ups, etc.? And how much is enough?
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  - 59 Does the couple's age make a difference in being accepted to adopt? We're 38; is that going to work against us?
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  - 60 Is it safe for the child to get BCG vaccination?
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**1. How long does it take to adopt a child from Pakistan?**

If you are adopting an infant from Edhi, the whole process from the time you submit an application to when you can bring the baby home takes 10-15 months in most cases. This time is based largely on the agency from which you are adopting and their referral times. It typically takes 3-6 months for the in-country process, from the time you receive custody of the baby till you get the immigration paperwork completed

and get the child's visa.

**2. I am in the US wanting to adopt a child from Pakistan, where do I start?**

In order to adopt a child from overseas and bring him/her to the US, you need to satisfy BCIS (Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services) requirements. At least one of the adoptive parents needs to be a US Citizen. You have to engage an adoption agency registered in your state to conduct a home study for you.

Once the home study report is finalized, you submit that along with supporting paperwork and form I-600A Advance Petition to Adopt and Orphan to BCIS. More information on this process can be obtained from the [BCIS website](#). Once the I-600A application is received by BCIS, you receive an appointment for finger printing. It takes 1-3 months to get I-600A approval in most states.

**3. Can the Application to Edhi be filed before we get an I-600A approved?**

You can contact Edhi and other organizations and submit your application to them in parallel with the home study process. You don't need to wait till I-600A approval to apply to Edhi. It is a good idea to have that process at least started though. Adoption is easier if your I-600A is already on file with BCIS or approved BEFORE you get custody of your child in Pakistan.

**4. How would we move forward after doing the home study and I-600A form to actually get a baby?**

You typically wait to get your I-600A approved before you can get a baby through Edhi. In some cases, they do place a child before you have your approval but may not release the baby for legal paperwork till the approval is on file with them. Once your application is on file with Edhi, it is a good idea for your local contact in Karachi to keep in touch with Edhi on a regular basis. Typically, after the initial face-to-face meeting, a phone call every other week is sufficient. When they have a baby available for you they will call your local representative to come and claim the child on your behalf.

**5. How does Edhi determine the interest and commitment of an adoptive family?**

Edhi gages your interest and commitment to the adoption by the diligence with which you and your local contact keep in touch with Edhi. They prefer to interview the adoptive parents face to face, but if you are overseas, they determine it by the commitment of your family/local contact in keeping in touch with them on your behalf. It is a good idea to have one or two people meet Mrs. Edhi in person on your behalf to get her satisfied about your case, and then follow up regularly and aggressively.

**6. Once in Pakistan, do you choose a baby or does a baby somehow get assigned to you?**

It is a combination of both, they call you when they have a baby that meets your requests, on the application they ask whether you want a boy or girl and the skin color you prefer. And they try to match babies with similar physical features as the parents, that is one of the reason they want your pictures. However, it is hard to tell on a baby who is a couple of days old. Once they call to let you know a baby is available for you, you have the choice to accept or reject the referral. The official Edhi stance is that the baby was left in a jhoola but they run many women's shelters where pregnant girls stay & there is a maternity ward at the mithadar center where we get the babies for adoption, so for all you know you get a baby whose mom looks like you!

**7. The State Dept. document stated that the I-600 could be filed in Islamabad. Is there a consulate in Karachi these days that can accept the application?**

There is a consulate in Karachi but the I-600 applications are only accepted at the US Embassy in Islamabad.

**8. Does Edhi typically place newborns? If so, is there an additional wait to get a newborn child? (I can't imagine they have enough newborns at any one time).**

Edhi typically only places newborns for adoption, especially overseas. There is usually a 2-6 month wait for a newborn child from the time you submit your application to Edhi. They have a lot of applications

from prospective adoptive parents and don't always have babies available to meet their needs. Also, they only place one child with a family at a given time. You have to apply again after a couple of years if you want more than one child.

**9. How much is the typical cost for the entire process, including expenses there and here (for families adopting and bringing children to US)?**

The cost of a typical adoption in Pakistan is between \$8-10k, which includes home study, I-600A application and finger-printing, round-trip airfare for 2 adults and baby's one-way air-fare, attorney's fees, court fees, both in Pakistan and here for the adoption in your state, passport fee, visa fee, travel to Islamabad for I-600 application and visa application, and any other expenses associated with the process.

**10 Are the babies in Pakistan healthy? If moms are living in poverty, do they have adequate nutrition and prenatal care?**

Most babies placed for adoption are healthy and full-term, although some are low birth weight due to inadequate nutrition and pre-natal care. Once they get proper nutrition, they tend to catch up and lead normal healthy lives.

**11 Once we get a baby, what is the paper work that needs to be done in Pakistan?**

After you get a baby through Ehdi, there is typically a three-month waiting period before Edhi issues you documents certifying that this is an abandoned baby and has been placed with you. Recently, Mrs. Edhi has been allowing overseas couples to have a shorter, approximately 2 month wait period for release of paperwork. This shorter wait time is a privilege that is secondary to Mrs. Edhi's personal satisfaction after the child's placement. You then need to get a birth certificate from the Mithadar office of registrar of births & deaths. The area councilor will approve your application. The lawyer you engage in Pakistan can help you with this process. You are then ready to apply for guardianship of the child in a civil family court in Pakistan. After you have a guardianship decree from the court you will have to obtain a "B" form, also called CRC (Child Registration

Certificate), from the offices of NADRA and get a national ID card number issued for the baby. (It is just a number, they can get the card after they turn 18). Once you have the "B" form with the ID number you can apply and get a passport made for the child. You are then ready to proceed with the filling of I-600 in Islamabad. You will have to make two trips to the US embassy, once to file the I-600 and the second for the issuance of the visa when your application is approved.

**12 I am interested in adopting a child orphaned by the October 8, 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. Are these children available for adoption?**

The Government of Pakistan imposed a temporary ban on the adoption of children orphaned by the earthquake. As of March 2006, the ban is still in place. However, this group has put together a petition requesting the Government of Pakistan to reconsider its decision and open up adoption of these orphans so they can be placed with carefully screened adoptive families. We plan to present this petition to the Government of Pakistan and hope that these children can ultimately find happy and stable homes and loving adoptive families as a result.

**13 Any other advice to help expedite the process in Pakistan?**

In order to get the baby's passport, at least one of the parents has to submit an application with his/her ID card. New computerized ID cards have been issued to all Pakistanis over the past 3-4 years. It is a good idea for you to have your CNIC (Computerized National Identity Card) or NICOP (National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis) made through NADRA so you do not have any delays due to the processing of your NICOP. It takes 4-6 weeks to get the new card.

**14 When is the best time to let a child know they are adopted?**

This is not an easy question to answer as every child and every situation is different. We believe it is important for the child to know who they are and where they came from right from the very beginning, in age appropriate ways, of course. I want my daughter to know that

she was chosen as a loved and cherished child, before she finds out from others that she was abandoned by her birthparents and adopted by you through Edhi. There are a lot of resources on adoption, Here is a link to some books that discuss the subject. [http://www.tapestrybooks.com/catalog/text/b\\_talk.shtml#talkchld](http://www.tapestrybooks.com/catalog/text/b_talk.shtml#talkchld)

Do discuss among yourselves the way you are going to tell your child she was adopted from the Edhi Foundation or elsewhere. The main concern is to make sure she knows how much you wanted her and how she filled a void in your hearts no one else could. That is why you decided to name her what you did because of what her name means to you. Sometimes people assume there is an emotional distance between adopted children and their parents that isn't an issue among birth parents and their biological children. Our view on this is that heart not helix makes a family. You want to instill in your child that adoption and procreation are TWO routes that lead to the SAME place--a complete family. The variables are different, but EQUAL just as  $2+2=4$  and  $3+1=4$ . You want your child to fully understand that she by no means holds an inferior status on the "how much we love you" scale because you didn't give birth to her. When the situation presents itself, plan to give a short and sweet answer to a "short and sweet" little girl/boy. "Allah makes mommies and daddies two ways. Some babies are born to them and some babies are adopted. Babies who are born grow under their mommies' hearts. Babies who are adopted grow in their mommies' hearts. Do you want to see how you grew in our hearts?

It is a good idea to keep a photo journal or scrapbook of your adoption journey to share with your child when you discuss this with her. Sit down together with her and show her the photo journal of each step of the way in her adoption. Take pictures of yourselves mailing the adoption papers to the Edhi Foundation, snapshots of meetings with social worker, and pictures of you talking to Mrs. Edhi on the phone, etc. Under each photo, have simple captions like,

"We are telling Mrs. Edhi how much we love you", "We are getting our home ready for you" and so forth. It is always very important to maintain good communication with children, whether adopted or not. And communication is really the key in this situation as well. You want your child to have the confidence that you love her very much, before you broach this subject with her. She will probably not comprehend much of it till she is 4-5 years old, but it is important for that "story" to

be consistent. It is important to let her know that she is your gift from God. We believe that nothing good ever came from a lie, so plan to be as honest as possible with her from the beginning but use age appropriate terms. You don't want your child to come to you with tears streaming down her face because she overheard a friend or relative saying something that should have come from her parents in a loving way. After all, we don't live on an island and many people are aware of her adoption. It would be silly to tell one lie after another her entire life. The way she joined your family is a blessed event to be celebrated, not hidden or apologized for. "He has given you everything you have asked Him for. If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them all.." (Ibrahim 34).

#### **15 How can I adopt a relative child from Pakistan?**

Under the American law you can adopt the child upto the age of 16 yrs. The particulars of child need to be included in the homestudy and it has to be mentioned that the present real mother or father is incapable of maintaining the child giving reasons.

#### **16 What is the process for adopting a child for persons residing in Pakistan?**

The process for families in Pakistan consists of only getting the guardianship and birth certificate of the child after receiving the baby. Contact the local adoption agency and see what they say about the possibility of getting a child through them.

Edhi only place children for adoption through the Mithadar Karachi center, but there may be local Edhi offices which could be contacted to see if they can help in the process. Edhi typically has a 2-3 month waiting period after you submit your application till you get placed with a child, and they give you custody of the child right away. They call your local contact to pick up the baby, usually you don't have more than a couple of hours response time before they call the next family on the list, so it is important to have someone lined up who can take custody of the child till you can get there. Edhi releases the child for legal paperwork after a 2-3 month waiting period, and at that point you get a provisional birth certificate from them.

With this document in hand, you can apply for the baby's birth certificate in Saddar / Mithadar Union Council (the governing body for the Edhi office). Once you get the release from Edhi you will need to apply to the family court for guardianship of the baby, under the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890.

You will need to hire a lawyer to represent your case in family court. Once you have the legal guardianship order, you can apply for the baby's CRC with NADRA to get the child registered in NADRA database and also to get his/her passport if desired. The passport is a must for people residing outside Pakistan, since they need to get a visa to bring the child home with them, but not a necessity if you are living in Pakistan.

**17 How can i get guradianship decree from pakistan court while staying in US?**

You can get the court decree directly while staying in USA. For this, you must have the home study with the name of the child and under whose foster care child is. Your home study must be approved by USCIS with child name written on it and power of attorney in the name of the person who will represent you and your spouse in the court of law.

**18 Is it important to have a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) to make our child's CRC/CNIC, as I think for overseas Pakistanis the requirement is just NICOP?**

For overseas residents, only NICOP is required to make child's CRC. It may help to go to another NADRA office in the city as sometimes the clerks are confused about the matter.

**19 Can you guide me about the induced lactation? How long does it take, what medicines are involved?**

You may want to speak with a lactation consultant. Information on the induced lactation is also provided at <http://www.asklenore.info> where they provide all the protocols for adoptive breastfeeding.

The accelerated protocol requires 20 mg of Motillium 4 times a day

along with the birth control Yasmin (active pills only) for about six weeks. Then stop the Yasmin and start the pump. A Medela's Pump 'n Style (about \$300) is recommended. You may want to use a sippy cup if the child is older.

The herbs Fenugreek and Blessed Thistle are also recommended to increase quantity.

**20 Do you need an appointment to file the I-600 in Islamabad or do you just show up?**

You do not need an appointment to file I-600 in Islamabad, they accept applications Monday through Thursday, but it is a good idea to confirm requirements over the phone or email before showing up to apply, to make sure you have all your documents in order..

**21 How long does it take from the time you file the I-600 in Islamabad to the time that you are given a visa appointment?**

The average time is 3-6 weeks, however, it can vary from a day to 9 weeks.

**22 Is this right that you need to file the I-600 BEFORE you can make an appointment with the doctor?**

The sealed medical exam is a requirement for I600 when filed in Islamabad. Getting your child's medical exam done before applying for I600 will expedite your process. The doctors office in Islamabad is highly recommended as they already have all the necessary paperwork, all you would have to do is make the appointment and let them know its for an adoption case.

**23 Can you go home as soon as the child gets the visa or do you need to hang around Pakistan for something else?**

You can go home right away after the child's visa is stamped in his/her passport.

**24 How does the Power of Attorney works for adoption in Pakistan?**

Power of attorney is a legal tool that many adoptive parents utilize in the adoption process. Power of attorney basically grants one party the ability to act on the behalf of another party. This eases the process of getting all supporting documents made along with being able to gain guardianship.

Many couples find that only one spouse (the petitioner) is able to make the commitment of the lengthy in-country stay required to complete and adoption. The petitioner should get power-of-attorney from their spouse before embarking on their journey to Pakistan and have it notarized by any local notary. It may be prudent to also have the spouse print and pre-sign all forms that are available for download.

Another use for power of attorney is when neither adoptive parent is able to complete the complete in-country stay and wish to designate someone to act on his or her behalf. In this situation, it is important to get the power of attorney document notarized by a local Pakistan consulate or the embassy. Also important is to ascertain that your attorney in Pakistan has experience in handling such cases.

**25 I am still uncertain whether it is better to file the I600 locally vs. Islamabad?**

When one applies locally it takes them a week to decide (varies from city to city). After which you will receive an 171H approval which signals applicant to contact the Immigrant Visa Section in Islamabad and make an appointment for an interview out there. Homeland Security forwards the notice to the National Visa Center in New Hampshire which records and relays the information to Islamabad. See Pakistan in country process for Islamabad application.

**26 Do we need to take original documents with us to Pakistan or only Notarized copies?**

You need to take all original documents with you, as well as notarized copies. When you submit I-600 they keep all originals for review and

return them when you get your baby's visa.

**27 Is there an "expiration" date on Home Studies?**

Your home study typically expires in 18-24 months. You would need to get an update done if there is a change in status, like a new job, move to a different home, a change in family status (addition of a new baby), etc. You may want to talk to a social worker/adoption agency in your state to get specific details.

**28 Is a single woman able to adopt from Pakistan?**

There is nothing in the law that prohibits single women from adopting, if they can satisfy the requirements for the organization placing the babies. Incidentally, Hadiqa Kiyani, a famous pop singer in Pakistan, has recently adopted a little boy from Edhi. She is a single mom and a high profile one!

**29 How long does it normally take to get the court order of guardianship (or judge's letter)?**

This varies greatly based on your lawyer and their experience with adoption cases. It can vary from one day to several weeks. Before engaging a lawyer in Pakistan ask them how many adoption cases they have handled and their timeframes for guardianship orders.

**30 Our adoptive child will be non-mahram. How can we induce lactation to address this issue?**

The mahram subject is a real and very important issue to many adoptive parents. The good news is that lactation can be induced. In fact, several of our members have successfully undergone adoptive breastfeeding. It is a good idea to talk with a lactation consultant who can guide you through the process. Some ideas from our members include pumping about 9-10 times a day for 30-60 minutes using a hospital-grade breast pump, taking the medications Yasmin and

Motillium, along with natural milk-producing herbs such as Fenugreek and Blessed Thistle.

**31 What does Islam says about inheritance and an adoptive child?**

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Read an Article on **Islamic Law and Adoption in Pakistan** by Zafar Iqbal Kalanauri on **<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?shva=1#i>**

**32 Can I adopt my niece/nephew/relative?**

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Yes. You can adopt a relative if one or both of the birth parents are deceased and the other parent willingly relinquishes parental rights through the Pakistani Family Court. It is best to consult an adoption lawyer in Pakistan. Several lawyers are listed on our website.

**33 Can I adopt an older child?**

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Yes. As long as the child is less than sixteen years of age.

**34 How can I help earthquake orphans?**

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The Pakistani government has banned the adoption of children orphaned by the 2005 earthquake. We are trying to change this so that these children, who have already lost so much, can be adopted into loving homes and families. If you would like to see this change please sign our petition.

**35 What if I do not have a local contact in Pakistan?**

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Unfortunately, Edhi Foundation does require a local contact. They rely on this contact to pick up the child once a baby becomes available. If a local contact cannot/does not pick up the baby, Edhi Foundation will

call the next couple on the waiting list.

**36 Should I tell the child the truth about adoption?**

Yes, absolutely. We, at Pakistan Adoption, feel that nothing good can ever come out of a lie. Imagine the devastation it would cause your family if your child found out that he or she was adopted from someone else. Secrets like this do get out and the level of trust between you and your child would be gone forever. Adoption is nothing to be ashamed of. It is a beautiful way to build a family. Celebrate it!

**37 We are not Muslim. Can we still adopt from Pakistan?**

Yes. Christians can adopt in Pakistan as they are governed by Christian laws. Muslims, on the other hand, do not "adopt" a child but gain guardianship of the child according to Muslim law. However, it is important to note that most Pakistani orphanages will only allow a Christian couple to adopt a child born to a Christian mother. One option for couples would be to look into Christian orphanages/NGOs in Pakistan.

**38 I and/or my spouse converted to Islam. Can we still adopt from Pakistan?**

Yes. In addition to all the regular paperwork, you will need a Certificate of Conversion to prove that the conversion took place, your Islamic marriage certificate (Nikka Namah), and a letter from a religious leader or imam vouching that you and your spouse are Muslims in good standing and that you intend to raise the child in the Islamic faith.

**39 Do I need a NICOP card for the adoption or will a CNIC or POC card suffice?**

The NICOP card is required to get a passport for the child so that he/she can go home with you. We have talked to the Pakistani Embassy and NADRA on several occasions to determine if the POC

card would be sufficient for this purpose, but have not received a clear answer. Since the U.S. now allows its citizens to hold dual nationalities, your best bet would be to apply for a NICOP to avoid any potential problems with the adoption process. If a NICOP card is not possible the second best choice would be to apply for a CNIC card.

**40 How can I get more involved with Pakistan Adoption?**

Join our Pakistan Adoption Yahoo! Group. It is a safe and supportive community for people who have adopted from, or are interested in adopting from, Pakistan.

**41 What is the best time to call Mrs. Edhi?**

The best time to call Mrs. Edhi is early morning, she is usually in the office 8-10 am.

**42 Everytime we call Edhi Foundation, someone named Almas answers the phone. Who is she and can she help us?**

Almas is Mrs. Edhi's right hand. She keeps a record of how many times a family calls to gauge the level of interest in adoption. If you can't get a hold of Mrs. Edhi, Almas is the next best person to talk to regarding your adoption.

**43 Does the No Objection Authority Letter need to be translated into English?**

Edhi Foundation should give you the letter in English. If they do not, you may request a translated copy in English.

**44 We live in a rented, one bedroom apartment. Will this affect our adoption?**

Many families who do not own property have successfully adopted from Pakistan. Orphanages look for families that can provide a child with a loving, caring environment more than anything.

**45 How frequently should I update on orphanage on the progress of my child?**

It varies. Edhi Foundation requires that you send updates along with a few current photographs every three months. Most members send an update and photographs every month until the child is six months old, after which they send updates every three months until the child's first birthday, after which updates can be sent once or twice a year. And once your child can write, have him/her send an update letter him/herself!

**46 How long does it take to adopt?**

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**47 How much does it cost to adopt?**

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**48 I will be staying at a hotel while I am in Pakistan. Can I give this address to the orphanage?**

Yes, if your stay in Pakistan is temporary. You should, however, eventually give them the permanent address of someone you know.

**49 Can we adopt privately?**

Read an Article on **Islamic Law and Adoption in Pakistan** by Zafar Iqbal Kalanauri on **<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?shva=1#i>**

**50 What is the legal definition of an orphan?**

Under U.S. immigration law, an orphan is a foreign child who does not have any parents because of the death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from, both parents. An orphan can also be a foreign-born child with a sole or surviving parent who is unable to provide for the child's basic needs, consistent with the local standards of the foreign sending country, and has, in writing, irrevocably released the child for emigration and adoption. For such a child to gain immigration benefits, an orphan petition must be filed before his or her 16th birthday. The only exception to this is when a child is adopted with or after a sibling who is considered a "child" under the Act who has been or will be adopted by the same adoptive or prospective adoptive parent(s). In this type of case, the petition must be filed before the child reaches age 18.

**51 We have a baby available but do not have any of the paperwork done. What do we do?**

It is strongly recommend that you complete your home study and submit the I-600A before you go to Pakistan to receive custody of the child. Although you can apply for the I-600 directly (without first getting the I-600A approved), it is not recommend, especially in Pakistan, because of the length of time it takes for approval. You must have the home study completed and the I-600 approved in order to apply for an immigrant visa to bring the child back to the US. If you go to Pakistan and take custody of a child without having your home study done, you will need to come back to US to complete your home study and then apply for I-600. In such "private adoption" cases, the US Embassy in Pakistan may not accept the child as an orphan and you will have a very difficult time bringing that baby home.

**52 We can not go to Pakistan for the adoption process. What are our options?**

You can give someone you trust in Pakistan Power of Attorney to

represent you throughout the adoption process.

**53 How often should we call Edhi to show how interested we are in adoption?**

That depends entirely on you. Some of our members called two or three times a week. Your local contact should also call frequently to further your case. In fact, Mrs. Edhi has said in several cases that the diligence of the local contact was the deciding factor for her to offer the child for adoption. The more interest you and your local contact show, the more likely it is that you will get your baby sooner.

**54 Does Edhi accept faxed applications? Do they require an original signature?**

Edhi Foundation does not currently accept electronic applications. They do accept faxed applications, however, they also require photographs and other documents. One option is to scan the completed application form and other documents and email them along with your photographs to your local Pakistani contact who can then print the documents and photographs and submit them to Edhi foundation. Edhi Foundation does not require original signatures on the application form.

**55 If and when we get the call for the baby and if my husband is unable to go, will I need to get the power of attorney from him?**

Power of attorney authorizes the designee on behalf of the giver. Yes, if your husband is unable to go, it is a good idea to have him give you a power of attorney to act on his behalf in all matters pertaining to the adoption. For legal purposes, it then does not require his presence at all in Pakistan, you can work through the system with that piece of paper in hand. However, it is important for emotional reasons that he be with you at least through a couple of steps.

**60 Is it safe for the child to get BCG vaccination?**

Some studies say that though BCG vaccination is not harmful, some people who have received the BCG vaccine are tested positive for TB using the mantoux test (This is the test where a small bubble of fluid is injected just under the skin of the forearm and have you return in 2 days to have it read). People who have received the BCG vaccine usually have to get a chest x-ray to confirm that they do not have TB. Most children are tested for TB before they start school. The chest x-ray is not a big deal, but just a hassle. It is not known if the newer BCG vaccines are any different, however, in US BCG vaccine is not give