

## **THE POST ADOPTION ATTENTION SERVICE OF CATALUNYA. A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE FOR NEW FAMILY NEEDS. THE INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION CHALLENGE**

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### **Abstract**

The spectacular increase in international adoptions in Catalunya in the past 5 years constitutes a new complex social challenge that needs to be born in mind and that demands a profound analysis. This is why the Administration, sensitive to the new emerging social demands, has assumed the commitment to be able to give an adequate reply to the present and future international adoption circumstances.

Via the Catalan Institute for Fostering and Adoption, as a competent organisation for adoption in the Catalan territory, a public consulting service and psychological and education orientation has been set up for all those adoptive families or adopted people who need it.

This new service, aware of the complexity of any adoption process (from the point of view of parent-child bonding) intends to offer a personalised attention to the adoptive families who need support and orientation to face the needs implied by the rearing and education of adoptive children, and also the relationship between these and the parents during the evolution of their process.

In this way, special attention will be paid to the crises that may occur within the adoption framework and tools, guidelines and orientation will be available to promote the growth and welfare of these families.

The Post Adoptive Service, started in June 2005, aims to offer:

- An area of assessment and orientation in the face of doubts and difficulties that arise both in an individual and family surrounding.
- An area for group reflexion and debate for parents and adopted children to deal with different topics, needs and difficulties that may appear during the post adoption period, promoting the exchange of experiences and mutual help amongst the adoption families and the adopted people.
- An area for psychological, social and legal accompaniment and assessment in the process of search for their origins for anyone who wishes this.
- An area to resolve consultations and orientation for professionals and social agents related to adopting (schools, medical services..) so that they can give a better response to the challenges presented by adoption, within their own field.

The Post Adoptive Service of Catalunya has been created with the aim of being a specialised public service that can respond to new family needs such as those implicated by adoption and in particular by international adoption. The complexity of international adoption with all its viewpoints: social, cultural biological, psychological and legal, creates the need for this kind of resource.

The creation of this new service is part of the awareness of the reality of international adoption in Catalunya which deserves special attention and which will determine its present and future characteristics. Only just over ten years ago the international adoption in Catalunya was practically non existent, and represented less than 100 adoptions a year.

Whereas, in the last 5 years (2001-2005) the international adoptions have increased in a unique, spectacular way, with this period representing a great boom of international adoption in our community.

In these past five years, over 6,665 adoptions have taken place, 8,854 Certificates of Aptitude have been given, 15 international adoption organisations have been authorised to handle the dossiers in over 25 countries, and finally 14 family associations have been created, the majority connected to the adopted child's country of origin.

This data situates Catalunya in the first place in the world in relation to its population as to the number of adoptions carried out with an index of 20 adoptions per 100,000 inhabitants during 2005. From our service we have tried to analyse some of the factors that have influenced the spectacular increase in adoptions in our country in the past few years.