

Regulation of adoption of minors in The Bahamas

Applications for the adoption of a child are made to the Supreme Court pursuant to the Adoption of Children Act. A Guardian ad Litem is usually appointed by the court in these in order the safeguard the interest of the child. Where the Director of Social Services is appointed as Guardian ad Litem a thorough and careful investigation is conducted on the home of the applicants. The Department of Social Services provides services for adoption/foster care and Guardian Ad Litem Reports. Persons must make application for adoption. Single as well as married couples are eligible to adopt. The Adoption Committee makes a determination as to whether applicants are suitable to adopt children in the care and custody of the Minister of State For Social Development The age requirement is - at least one prospective adoptive parent must be at minimum, 25 years of age.

- **Legislation**

The main legislative framework governing Adoption is the Adoption of Children Act Chapter 131. This Act makes provision for the adoption of infants that is a child under the age of eighteen years. Section 4 of the Act provides for the adoption of a foreign child. Section 7 of the Act requires the consent of the parent or guardian. Section 11 outlines the effect of the Adoption Order which is that all rights, duties, obligations and liabilities of the parents or guardians of the adopted child relative to the future custody, maintenance and shall be extinguished. Section 18 of the Act makes provision for the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem who has the responsibility of safeguarding the interest of the infant before the court. Further the Adoption of Children Act was recently amended to provide that during adoption proceedings, no order shall be made by the court unless the originating summons has been served on the Director of the Department of Social Services. Further the Director is also entitled to be represented at the hearing.