



# The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children: What Parents Need to Know

BY JEANNE T. TATE

## *What is the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children?*

The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) is a uniform law enacted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, establishing procedures for interstate adoption placements. It applies only to children who are placed for adoption across state lines, and not to placements with a close adult relative.

## *How does the ICPC process work?*

If a family is from one state and the baby they wish to adopt is born in another:

1. The family travels to the sending state to accept placement of the child.
2. Before the family is allowed to leave the sending state, the adoption agency submits the ICPC paperwork to the sending state's ICPC office.
3. After the sending state has approved the adoption, the paperwork is forwarded to the receiving state's ICPC office.
4. Once the receiving state has approved the paperwork, the family is notified, and only then can they return to their state with their child.

If ICPC is not followed, or the family leaves prior to approval, the adoption could be jeopardized. Most states allow the adoptive family to stay with the child during the wait.

## *How much time is needed to process ICPC paperwork?*

ICPC cannot begin until one or both (depending on the situation) birthparents' rights have been surrendered. All documents must be submitted together. Some items (discharge paperwork, medical records) are not available until the baby is released from the hospital.

The paperwork usually takes seven to 10 business days to process, although ICPC offices in some states take longer. Adoptive families should make the necessary arrangements to stay in the sending state for at least two weeks. Only one parent is required to stay with the child. Foster care can be arranged if necessary.

## *Should I contact the ICPC offices to check our approval status?*

Adoptive families should not contact ICPC offices; they will be notified immediately upon ICPC approval. Your attorney or agency needs to know where to reach you at all times during this wait.

## *Are there other situations in which ICPC is involved?*

ICPC may be triggered if the adoptive parents move from their home state prior

## ICPC Safeguards and Requirements

The ICPC offers safeguards to all parties involved in the adoption, especially the child, by:

- ◆ requiring both a homestudy of the adoptive family and an evaluation of the interstate placement.
- ◆ ensuring that the sending and receiving states' laws and policies are followed.
- ◆ assigning responsibility to the sending agency, thus guaranteeing the child's legal and financial protection.
- ◆ allowing the receiving state the opportunity to consent to or deny the adoptive placement.
- ◆ providing for continual supervision and regular reports on each interstate placement.
- ◆ ensuring that the sending agency does not lose legal jurisdiction of the child after he moves to the receiving state.

to finalization of the adoption. Most states require an ICPC filing prior to the move. ICPC is not involved in international placements.

*Jeanne Tate is a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys and is President of the Florida Adoption Council.*

## afasks

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[email] letters@adoptivefamilies.com

[mail] 42 W. 38 St., Ste. 901, NYC 10018

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