



INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL ABDUCTION



Prevention

In 2003, the Office of Children's Issues (CI) established a new unit that specializes in preventing international parental child abductions (IPCA). On a daily basis, CI receives dozens of calls and written requests for assistance and information from parents, attorneys, other government agencies, and private organizations in the United States seeking to prevent international parental child abductions. CI serves as the information disseminator for strategies and approaches to keep children safe from international parental child abductions. CI staff responds to inquiries by providing information about on-line resources and discussing issues such as dual nationality and passport concerns, and the role of law enforcement and the courts in preventing an abduction.

The Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program

The Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program (CPIAP) is one of the CI's most important tools for preventing IPCA. The program allows parents to request the registration of their U.S. citizen children in the Department of State's Passport Lookout System. If the Department receives a passport application for a child who is registered in CPIAP, the Department contacts and alerts the parent(s). The Passport Lookout System gives all national passport agencies as well as U.S. embassies and consulates abroad an alert on a child's name if a parent or guardian registers an objection to passport issuance for his/her child, thus potentially providing parents advance warning of possible plans for international travel that require issuance of a new passport

Our office entered 3,102 children into the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program in FY 2007

Since the program has been incorporated into CI, more than 13,000 cases have been opened through CPIAP. The daily requests for assistance and lookouts on children's passports continue to require extensive customer service. In FY 2007, CI entered more than 3,100 cases into the Passport Lookout System. Applying both the two-parent signature law and the federal regulation permitting parents to object to issuance of a passport to their children under age 18, CI is able to assure parents who fear the abduction of their children that the Department will not issue passports without their knowledge or, in certain cases, without their permission.

- ⚠ The inability to obtain a U.S. passport through the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program does not prevent a dual-national child from obtaining and traveling on a foreign passport. There is no legal authority that could require foreign embassies to adhere to U.S. regulations regarding issuance and denial of their passports to U.S. citizen minors who have dual nationality.

