



**U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services**

Citizenship Through Parents

There are two general ways to obtain citizenship through U.S. citizen parents, one at birth and one after birth but before the age of 18. The term “parents” includes: the genetic father, the genetic mother, and the non-genetic gestational mother, if she is the legal parent at the time of birth under the law of the relevant jurisdiction. For more information, see [USCIS Policy Manual guidance on Children of U.S. Citizens](#).

Citizenship at Birth for Children Born Outside the U.S. and its Territories

For information on who qualifies as a “child” for citizenship purposes, see USCIS Policy Manual guidance on Children of U.S. Citizens.

<p>In a general, a Child Born Outside the U.S. is a Citizen at Birth when the Child’s Parents Are Married to each other at the Time of Birth IF...</p>	<p>AND...</p>
<p>Both parents are U.S. citizens at the time of birth,</p>	<p>At least one parent lived in the U.S. or its territories prior to the birth.</p>
<p>One parent is a U.S. citizen at the time of birth and the birthdate is on or after November 14, 1986</p>	<p>The U.S. citizen parent had been physically present in the U.S. or its territories for a period of at least five years at some time in his or her life prior to the birth, of which at least two years were after his or her 14th birthday.</p> <p>If the U.S. citizen parent spent time abroad in any of the following three capacities, this can also be counted towards the physical presence requirement:</p>

<p>In a general, a Child Born Outside the U.S. is a Citizen at Birth when the Child's Parents Are Married to each other at the Time of Birth IF...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AND...</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving honorably in the U.S. armed forces; • Employed with the U.S. government; or • Employed with certain international organizations. <p>Additionally, time spent abroad by the U.S. citizen parent while the U.S. citizen parent was the unmarried son or daughter and a member of the household of a person who meets any of the three conditions listed above can also be counted.</p>
<p>In general, a Child Born Outside the U.S. is a Citizen at Birth when the Child's Parents Are Not Married to each other at the Time of Birth...IF</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AND...</p>
<p>The genetic or non-genetic gestational legal mother is a U.S. citizen at the time of birth, and the birth date is after December 23, 1952</p>	<p>The mother had previously been physically present in the United States or one of its outlying possessions for a continuous period of at least one year.</p>
<p>The genetic father is a U.S. citizen at the time of birth, the mother is an alien, and the birthdate is on or after November 14, 1986</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A blood relationship between the person and the father is established by clear and convincing evidence, • The father had the nationality of the United States at the time of the person's birth, • The father (unless deceased) has agreed in writing to provide financial support for the person until the person reaches the age of 18 years, and • While the person is under the age of 18 years one of the following occurs:

<p>In a general, a Child Born Outside the U.S. is a Citizen at Birth when the Child's Parents Are Married to each other at the Time of Birth IF...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AND...</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The person is legitimated under the law of the person's residence or domicile ◦ The father acknowledges paternity of the person in writing under oath, or ◦ The paternity of the person is established by adjudication of a competent court, and <p>The U.S. citizen parent was physically present in the U.S. or its territories for a period of at least 5 years at some time in his or her life prior to the birth, at least 2 of which were after his or her 14th birthday.</p> <p>If the U.S. citizen parent spent time abroad in any of the following three capacities, this can also be counted towards the physical presence requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving honorably in the U.S. armed forces; • Employed with the U.S. government; or • Employed with certain international organizations. <p>Additionally, time spent abroad by the U.S. citizen parent while the U.S. citizen parent was the unmarried son or daughter and a member of the household of a person who meets any of the three conditions listed above can also be counted.</p>

Automatic U.S. Citizenship After Birth - But Before the Age of 18

<p>A Child Born Outside the U.S. is a Citizen after Birth IF...</p>	<p>AND...</p>
<p>The child was under 18 or not yet born on February 27, 2001</p>	<p>At least one parent is a U.S. citizen, the child is currently under 18 and residing in the U.S. in the legal and physical custody of the U.S. citizen parent pursuant to lawful admission for permanent residence.</p>
<p>The child was under 18 from December 24, 1952 to February 26, 2001</p>	<p>The child was residing as a Green Card holder in the U.S. and both parents naturalized before the child's 18th birthday; OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one parent died, that the surviving parent naturalized before the child turned 18. • If the parents legally separated, that the parent maintaining legal and physical custody naturalized before the child turned 18. • If the child was born out of wedlock and paternity has not been established by legitimation, the mother naturalized before the child turned 18. <p>NOTE: The order in which the child meets the conditions does not matter so long as the child meets all the conditions before his or her 18th birthday.</p>
<p>The child was adopted by a U.S. citizen parent</p>	<p>The child resides legally in the U.S. in the legal and physical custody of the U.S. citizen parent and meets the following conditions after February 27, 2001 but before his or her 18th birthday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adoptive parent adopted the child before his or her 16th birthday (or, in some cases, 18th birthday) and had legal custody of the child and resided with the child for at least two years; OR • The child was admitted to the United States as an orphan (IR-3) or Convention adoptee (IH-3) whose adoption by his or her U.S. citizen parent(s) was fully completed abroad; OR

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A Child Born Outside the U.S. is a Citizen after Birth IF...	AND...
	The child was admitted to the United States as an orphan (IR-4) or Convention adoptee (IH-4) who was coming to the United States to be adopted and the child's adoptive parent(s) completed the adoption before his or her 18 th birthday.

To apply for a Certificate of Citizenship, please see our [Form N-600 page](#) and read the instructions carefully to ensure that you qualify.

For more information, see our webpage [N-600: Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the USCIS Policy Manual, Volume 12, [Part H, Children of U.S. Citizens](#).

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