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Fifth Session Tenth Parliament Republic of  
Trinidad and Tobago

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REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**Act No. 4 of 2015**

[L.S.]

AN ACT to amend the Adoption of Children Act, 2000

*[Assented to 13th March, 2015]*

ENACTED by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago as Enactment  
follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the Adoption of Children Short title  
(Amendment) Act, 2015.

2. In this Act, "the Act" means the Adoption of Interpretation  
Children Act, 2000. Act No. 67 of 2000

- Long title amended
- 3.** The long title of the Act is amended by deleting—
- (a) the word “International” and substituting the words “United Nations”; and
  - (b) the word “1990” and substituting the word “1989”.
- Act amended
- 4.** The Act is amended—
- (a) by deleting the word “Board” and the words “Adoption Board” wherever they occur, except in the definition of “medical practitioner” in section 2 and in section 42, and substituting in each place the word “Authority”; and
  - (b) by deleting the word “court” wherever it occurs and substituting in each place the word “Court”.
- Section 2 amended
- 5.** Section 2 of the Act is amended by—
- (a) deleting the definition of “child care centre”;
  - (b) deleting in the definition of “Minister”, the words “Social and Community Development” and substituting the words “the welfare of children”; and
  - (c) inserting in the appropriate alphabetical sequence, the following new definitions:
    - “former parent” means a person who had care and control of a child prior to any application to adopt the child;
    - “resident” has the meaning assigned to it by section 5 of the Immigration Act;”.
- Chap. 18:01
- Part II repealed
- 6.** The Act is amended by repealing Part II.

7. Section 11 of the Act is repealed and the following section is substituted: Section 11 repealed and substituted

“Religious upbringing of child” 11. The Authority, when placing a child with an adopter, shall have regard so far as practicable, to the wishes of the parent, guardian or child, in relation to the religious upbringing of the child.”

8. Section 12 of the Act is amended— Section 12 amended

(a) in subsection (1), by deleting the word “An” and substituting the words “Subject to subsection (2), an”;

(b) in subsection (2), by—

(i) deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following paragraph:

“(b) one of the applicants is a parent, step-parent or relative of the child, or has been a step-parent or relative of the child;” and

(ii) in paragraph (c), by deleting the word “custody” and substituting the word “control”;

(c) by repealing subsection (3) and substituting the following subsection:

“(3) At any time during the probationary period—

(a) the adopter may give notice in writing to the Authority of his intention not to adopt the child; or

(b) the Authority may give the adopter notice in writing of the Authority’s decision not to allow the child to remain in the care of the adopter.”;

- (d) in subsection (5), by deleting the words “shall within seven days” and substituting the words “may, within twenty-one days”;
- (e) in subsection (6), by deleting the words “upon which that period expired” and substituting the words “following the expiration of the probationary period”; and
- (f) in subsection (7), by deleting the words “shall, within seven days” and substituting the words “may, within twenty-one days”.

Section 13  
amended

**9. Section 13 of the Act is amended by—**

- (a) repealing subsection (1) and substituting the following subsection:

“ (1) Before an adoption order is made in respect of a child who has been in the care and control of an applicant—

- (a) for at least three years preceding the application; or
- (b) for substantially all or most of his life,

no person shall remove that child from such care and control of the applicant against the applicant’s will except with the leave of the Court or under any written law or upon the arrest of the child.”; and

- (b) repealing subsection (2) and substituting the following subsections:

“ (2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars and imprisonment for nine months.

(3) Where a person is convicted under subsection (2), the Court may order that person to return the child to—

- (a) the applicant;
- (b) the parent of the child;

- (c) the guardian; or  
 (d) the Authority.”.

**10.** The Act is amended by repealing section 14 and substituting the following section: Section 14 repealed and substituted

“Notification by Authority on declining application 14. Where a person has made an application to the Authority to adopt a child and the Authority is of the opinion that the adoption of that child by that person would not be in the best interest of the child, the Authority shall notify the person accordingly.”.

**11.** The Act is amended by inserting after section 14, the following section: Section 14A inserted

“Appeals 14A. A person referred to in section 12(3)(b) or 14 may appeal from a decision of the Authority to a Judge of the High Court.”.

**12.** Section 15 of the Act is amended by— Section 15 amended

(a) repealing subsection (1) and substituting the following subsection:

“ (1) Where a person makes an application to the Authority to place a child for adoption and the Authority accepts that application, the Authority shall apply to the Court for an order declaring that child to be freed for adoption.”;

(b) repealing subsection (2) and substituting the following subsection:

“ (2) Where a child in respect of whom an application is made under subsection (1) cannot be cared for prior to an adoption order being made, the Authority shall take the child into its care in accordance with the Children’s Authority Act and may place the child with a foster parent or in a community residence.”; and

- (c) by inserting after subsection (2), the following subsection:

“ (2A) Where a child who has been in the care of the Authority, has been declared by the Court to be freed for adoption, the child shall remain in the care of the Authority, which may place the child with a foster parent or in a community residence, until such time as the Authority places the child with a suitable adopter.”.

Section 16  
amended

**13.** Section 16 of the Act is amended—

- (a) in subsection (1), by deleting the word “the” and substituting the word “a”;
- (b) in subsection (2), by inserting after the word “period”, the word “of”; and
- (c) by inserting after subsection (3), the following subsection:

“ (3A) Nothing in this section shall be construed as permitting the Authority to divulge to a former parent, any information except the notifications required under subsections (2) and (3).”.

Section 17  
amended

**14.** Section 17 of the Act is amended in subsection (3)—

- (a) by deleting the words “The revocation of an order made under section 15 operates,” and substituting the words “Where the Court revokes an order under section 15, the Court may make such further order as it thinks fit, including an order—”;
- (b) by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following paragraph:

“(b) to give parental responsibility to the parent making the application; or”;

- (c) in paragraph (c)(ii), by inserting the word “or” after the words “parent;”.

**15.** The Act is amended by repealing section 22 and substituting the following section: Section 22 repealed and substituted

“Consideration of views of the child” 22. Where an application for an adoption order is made in respect of a child, the Court shall, before making the order, take into consideration the views and wishes of the child having regard to the age and understanding of the child.”.

**16.** The Act is amended by repealing section 23. Section 23 repealed

**17.** Section 24 of the Act is amended— Section 24 amended

- (a) in subsection (2), by deleting the words “The grounds specified for the purpose in subsection (1) are that the parent” and substituting the words “Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Court may make an adoption order where the Court finds that the parent”;

- (b) in subsection (3), by inserting after the word “other”, the words “, unless they have separated and are living apart from each other and the separation is likely to be permanent”; and

- (c) in subsection (5), by deleting the words “deemed to have been abandoned if” and substituting the words “abandoned if, in the opinion of the Court,”.

**18.** Section 25 of the Act is amended in paragraph (b), by deleting the words “bring up” and substituting the word “raise”. Section 25 amended

**19.** Section 27 of the Act is amended by repealing subsection (3) and substituting the following subsection: Section 27 amended

“ (3) Proceedings in respect of an application to free a child for adoption or an application for an adoption order shall be held *in camera* and not generally published.”.

Section 29  
amended

**20.** Section 29(1) of the Act is amended in paragraph (b), by deleting the word “the” and substituting the word “a”.

Section 33  
amended

**21.** Section 33 of the Act is amended—

(a) by repealing subsections (2) and (3) and substituting the following subsections:

“ (2) Every adoption order shall contain a direction to the Registrar General to make in the Adopted Children Register—

(a) an entry recording the adoption of the child; and

(b) an entry recording the birth of the child in which each adopter shall be recorded as the parent of the child,

and the entries shall be in such forms as the Registrar General may approve.

(3) If, upon an application for an adoption order, it is proved to the satisfaction of the Court that—

(a) the child was born on a particular date; and

(b) the child is the same child to whom any entry in the Register of Births relates,

the adoption order shall contain a further direction to the Registrar General to cause the entry of the birth of the child in the Register of Births to be marked with the word “adopted”, and to record in the entries referred to in subsection (2), the date of birth of the child as stated in the adoption order.”;



(b) by repealing subsections (5), (6) and (7) and substituting the following subsections:

“ (5) A certified copy of an entry in the Register under subsection (2)(a) purporting to be signed by the Registrar General shall, without any further or other proof of such entry, where the entry contains a record of the date of the birth of the adopted child, be received as evidence of the adoption and of the date of the birth of the adopted child to which the same relates in all respects as though it were a certified copy of an entry in the Register of Births.

(5A) A certified copy of an entry in the Register under subsection (2)(b) purporting to be signed by the Registrar General shall, without any further or other proof of such entry, be received as evidence of the date of the birth of the child to which the same relates in all respects as though it were a certified copy of an entry in the Register of Births.

(6) The Registrar General shall cause an index of the Register to be made and kept in his office, and only the adopter of a child or a person authorised in writing, for the purpose, by the adopter or by the Authority, shall be entitled to search such index and to have a certified copy of any entry in the Register in all respects upon, and subject to the same terms,

conditions and regulations as to payment of fees and otherwise as are applicable under the Births and Deaths Registration Act, or any other Act, in respect of searches in indexes relating to births and deaths kept in the office of the Registrar General.

(7) The Registrar General shall, in addition to the Register and the index thereof, keep such other registers and books, and make such entries therein as may be necessary, to record and make traceable the connection between any entry in the Register of Births which has been marked “adopted” pursuant to this Act and any corresponding entry in the Register, and—

- (a) those other registers and books shall not be open to public inspection or search; and
- (b) the Registrar General shall not, except under an order of the Court, furnish any person with any information contained in, or with any copy or extract from, those registers or books.”.

Sections 33A, 33B  
and 33C inserted

**22.** The Act is amended by inserting after section 33, the following sections:

“Birth  
certificate of  
adopted child

33A. Notwithstanding any other written law, where the Registrar General issues a certificate in respect of the birth of an adopted child, the certificate shall bear no overt indication that the child was adopted, except such code as has been

approved by the Registrar General to distinguish the type of entry which is being certified.

Issuance of  
certificate of  
adoption

33B. Where the adopter of an adopted child or a person authorised in writing for the purpose by that adopter, applies to the Registrar General for the issue of a certified copy of an entry under section 33(2) in respect of that child and pays the prescribed fee, the Registrar General shall issue to that adopter or person the certified copy of the entry in the form approved by the Registrar General.

Application  
by adopted  
person for  
certificate of  
adoption

33C.(1) Where an adopted person who is at least eighteen years of age applies to the Registrar General for a certified copy of an entry under section 33(2) in respect of his adoption, and pays the prescribed fee, the Registrar General shall issue to him the certified copy of the entry in the form approved by the Registrar General.

(2) Where an adopted person who is under the age of eighteen years wishes to obtain a certified copy of an entry under section 33(2), he may apply to the Authority to act on his behalf.”.

**23.** The Act is amended by repealing section 34 and substituting the following sections: Section 34 repealed and substituted

“Disclosure of  
birth records  
of adopted  
children

34. (1) An adopted person who is at least eighteen years of age and the record of whose birth is kept by the Registrar General, may make an application in the prescribed manner to the Court for such information as is necessary to enable that person to obtain a certified copy of the record of his birth as recorded in the Register of Births and Deaths.

(2) On considering an application under subsection (1), the Court may—

- (a) refer the applicant to the Authority for assistance with accessing counselling; or
- (b) direct the Registrar General to furnish the applicant with such information as the Court thinks fit.

Application  
by adopted  
persons for  
certain  
information

34A.(1) An adopted person—

- (a) whose birth record is kept by the Registrar General;
- (b) who intends to get married; and
- (c) who pays the prescribed fee,

may make an application in the prescribed manner to the Registrar General to determine if the adopted person and the person they intend to marry are within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity for the purposes of the Marriage Act.

Chap. 45:01

(2) Where an application is made under subsection (1), the Registrar General may issue to the applicant, a written report indicating whether or not, from the information contained in the registers of birth or other records, the applicant and the person whom he intends to marry may be within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity for the purposes of the Marriage Act.

(3) Before supplying any information to an applicant under subsection (2), the Registrar General shall inform the applicant that he may access the Authority for assistance with counselling.”.

**24.** Section 35(1) of the Act is amended by— Section 35  
amended

- (a) deleting the words “, or may be”; and
- (b) inserting the words “parent, step-parent,” before the word “guardian”.

**25.** Section 36 of the Act is amended in Section 36  
amended subsection (1), by inserting after the words “have been made” the words “or are likely to be made,”.

**26.** Section 37 of the Act is amended by inserting Section 37  
amended after the words “by a national”, the words “or resident”.

**27.** Section 38 of the Act is amended by— Section 38  
amended

- (a) inserting after the words “a national”, the words “or resident”; and
- (b) deleting the words “all attempts to secure adoption by applicants who are nationals of Trinidad and Tobago have failed, and”.

**28.** Section 39 of the Act is amended by inserting Section 39  
amended after the word “by”, the word “registered”.

**29.** Section 40 of the Act is amended in subsection (2), Section 40  
amended by deleting the word “year” and substituting the word “years”.

**30.** Section 42 of the Act is amended by inserting Section 42  
amended after subsection (2), the following subsection:

“ (3) Any legal proceedings existing against the Adoption Board referred to in subsection (1) before the commencement of this Act, may be continued on, and after, the commencement of this Act, against the Authority.”.

**31.** The Act is amended by deleting the Schedule. Schedule deleted

Passed in the House of Representatives this 22nd day of January, 2015.

J. SAMPSON-MEIGUEL

*Clerk of the House*

Passed in the Senate this 3rd day of March, 2015.

N. ATIBA-DILCHAN

*Clerk of the Senate*