



FLO
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Advocacy Programs Services

FAMILY LIAISON OFFICE

Contingency Planning for Single Parents and Tandem Couples with Children

During any tour, a crisis can occur which requires the employee to work long hours. Arranging for the child to stay with friends reassures the child and allows the employee to concentrate on his/her job. Some crisis situations may require the sudden departure of family members and non-emergency personnel from a post. Tandem couples with children and single parent employees should determine early in their assignment if they are considered to be emergency (critical) personnel. Depending on the employee's position and the circumstances at post, it may be possible for a parent, with the supervisor's permission, to leave to take the child(ren) to the safehaven and return to post. In other cases this will not be possible.

The parent(s) should consider identifying an official American employee or American family member who is willing to take care of any issues that may arise when the parent(s) is/are unable to be physically present. NOTE: An official American employee or American family member can fly on short notice to a designated medevac point in an emergency. This person must be able to assume responsibility for the care of the dependents, authorize medical treatment, and accompany the minor child on a medevac or evacuation from post. When a child leaves post under the care of someone from the embassy community and is received by a family member at the official safehaven, both caregivers may need to know more about the child and have:

- List of allergies/ medications/ medical conditions
- Name of dentist/ orthodontist or pediatrician
- Guidelines for social activities, homework, TV, phone calls, allowances, snacking, etc
- Names and numbers of children's relatives

There are a variety of documents / resources that this person would need in order to care for a child. It is best to have copies of these documents on hand and ready to give a caregiver:

- Birth certificate, ID card, passport(s)
- Medical records, dental records, medical card, shot records
- School records and Individualized Education Plan (if applicable)
- Power of Attorney and location where a will is kept
- Information about any special funds required providing financial support

Discuss with long, and short, term providers the responsibilities and liabilities for caring for children. Try to cover as many possible scenarios as you can think of, discussing and deciding on how the provider should respond.

Important Factors to Consider When Choosing a Safehaven

- Children's needs and ages
- Child(ren)'s comfort with caregiver and caregiver's willingness and ability to adequately care for the child(ren)
- School (including for Special Needs Children, acceptance of the Individual Education Plan (IEP))
- Financial arrangements. (For Department of State employee's the Subsistence Expense Allowance, paid during an evacuation, can be deposited directly to the caregiver's or a joint account.)
- Education: Note that there is no education allowance at an alternate foreign safehaven. Be sure to hand carry all school records and make sure they are up to date.
- Financial: It is important to consider the financial arrangements with the individual who will be caring for your child.
- Communication: During a crisis it may not be possible to make phone calls or email. Discuss this with the child in advance.

Through contingency planning, the parent can provide a supportive and understanding environment for the child evacuee that will lay the foundation for the child and parent to work through the crisis and move together toward a period of positive growth.

Certificate of Acceptance as Guardian or Escort and Travel Authorization letters

Exit control laws of the host country may affect whether or not the U.S. citizen minor will be permitted to travel. In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated new procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the

child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian if they are not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure, in limited cases would they require a POA." It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary documents in order.

Special Instructions related to the Execution of Powers of Attorney

Creating a limited Power of Attorney (POA) may be a way to help a child leave the country with another family, or travel to the child's final destination. Whether the child is traveling alone or not, the caregiver receiving the child should have the ability to make legal or medical decisions. Depending on the law, or other requirements, a POA may not always serve your short/ long term care provider under all circumstances. Because of this, it is important that you let other persons see a draft of the POA before it is finalized in case they can add anything that will make the POA stronger and more effective. In most cases you will need more than one POA to cover the variety of cases that might arise. Have plenty of notarized copies of a POA in case you need to leave it on file with a department or institution. FSI has a template that will give you a place to start.

Department of State's Office of Employee Relations (HR/ER) has a contract with I.Q.: Information Quest. IQ offers document preparation services to assist employees, spouses or domestic partners with the preparation and/or updating of important legal documents such as simple wills, simple living wills (both free - up to four per employee and dependents per year) and advance directives such as Durable Power of Attorney, Health Care Power of Attorney and Health Care Directives (\$35 per document; maximum co-pay of \$95 for multiple documents). You can also request the preparation of these documents for dependent children or parents.

Contact Info Quest through their Website: www.worklife4you.com and look for "Registered Users" box (do not click on the "New User" link). Enter Screen Name: `statedepartment` and Password: `infoquest` (codes are case-sensitive). For assistance logging on to the website, contact the Help Desk at 888-604-9565. For a specialist call 1-866-552-4748, or 800-873-1322 or send email to Specialist@LifeCare.com .

Other agencies have similar employee assistance services. Call the USAID Staff Care Center within the U.S. toll free at 1-877-98USAID, direct at +1-919-645-4960 (long distance or international calling charges apply), or outside of the US at +44(0)208-987-6200. Call your international operator and request that the charges be reversed. Visit <http://staffcare.usaid.gov> (registration code: `usaid` password: `login`) or visit the USAID Staff Care center at 1101 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 531, Washington, D.C. 20004, for all services.

For Staff Care Program Management issues, contact Bernadette Mitchell (bmitchell@usaid.gov) Staff Care Unit, (202)567-4995 or Carrie Dailey (cdailey@usaid.gov) Staff care Unit, (202) 567-4712.

Special Considerations for Singles with children:

A power of attorney will not allow the provider to enroll/ register the child(ren) for services that the child(ren) would not be eligible for under the care of their parent(s). For singles who are divorced, you should consult with a lawyer and determine whether you need extra clarification as to the care of children in case you are incapacitated. Powers of attorney will not prevent another person, such as a non-custodial parent or relative, from petitioning a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain temporary or permanent custody.

For more information contact FloAskEvacuations@state.gov