

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Whether this will be your first time on an airplane or you are a seasoned world traveler, there are some important guidelines that we ask all visitors to consider before their visit.

**Stay cool.** (We don't mean just literally!) When you meet your sponsored child for the very first time, emotions can run high. There may even be tears of joy—and that's OK. But remember that your sponsored child will be just as excited as you—and may be pretty overwhelmed. Think about how he and his family are feeling, and try to balance your energy. This will also keep you from making well-meaning but potentially inappropriate suggestions or offers such as inviting the child to visit you in the U.S. The ChildFund staff member accompanying you can guide you on any specific cultural differences you need to know about that might lead to misunderstanding or embarrassment.

**Privacy matters.** For your protection, do not share your address, email or phone number for the duration of your visit. This is to prevent any inappropriate requests for money or assistance. We'll keep your information private, too. Likewise, we ask that you do not share specifics about your child's personal information—his last name, the name of the village where he lives, etc.—particularly online or on social media.

**A word about promises.** During your visit, you may feel compelled to help your child's family fulfill a certain need, like helping to build a well, buy livestock or cover education costs. While this is wonderful, we do ask that you take care not to make any promises to the child or the child's family during your visit. Bear in mind that what might seem to you like a casual comment could be understood by them as a promise you may not be able to keep. Instead, please discuss any gifts with the country's national office staff members, who are best equipped to guide you.

## GETTING READY FOR YOUR TRIP

### What should I wear? Are there any dress codes?

Many of our projects are located in hot and humid climates, and the local people may be culturally conservative. So, think simple, respectful and modest clothes (shirts with sleeves and long pants for men, skirts below the knees or slacks and no low-cut tops for women). Don't forget comfortable shoes for walking, and a hat for sun protection. If you have any questions or concerns, call Sponsor Care at 1-800-776-6767.

**May I take photos of my sponsored child?** Yes—usually. Taking photographs is such an important part of capturing your visit, and in most cases, it is not a problem. We even encourage it—and have some great tips for you in another brochure. However, in a few cultures, photographs are not welcome. Make sure to check with your ChildFund guide and get the OK before taking any pictures.

**What about bringing gifts?** Yes! But try to avoid bringing gifts that are extravagant. Simple gifts that are easy to pack are best (coloring books, markers, stickers, balloons, a ball, small doll). The staff in our national offices can offer suggestions as to what would be appropriate.



# BRING THE GIFT OF SPONSORSHIP TO LIFE

ChildFund<sup>®</sup>  
International

[www.ChildFund.org](http://www.ChildFund.org)

2821 Emerywood Parkway  
Richmond, Virginia 23294-3725 USA  
1-800-776-6767

ChildFund<sup>®</sup>  
International

“When we saw each other for the first time, there were no words, just long hugs .... In my wildest dreams, I didn’t know it could be so amazing.”

—Bernadeta Milewski, sponsor



### PLANNING A VISIT TO YOUR SPONSORED CHILD

You’ve written letters, sent gifts, exchanged photos and drawings, and shared details of your life with a special child whom you have gotten to know from far away, and we know you treasure this relationship. Like many sponsors, you might also long to take sponsorship to the next level—to meet the child whose drawings adorn your refrigerator door, to meet her parents, see the family goat that she talks about in her letters, maybe talk about the school where English is her favorite subject.

We want to make this possible for all sponsors who are interested. And we are so excited that you are one of them!

Thank you for your gift of sponsorship. We hope we can help bring that gift to life with this once-in-a-lifetime journey.

### A GREAT (BIG!) DECISION

Traveling across the world to a country that is probably very different from home is a big decision. But we think it’s a great one! This is an unparalleled opportunity to not only get to know your sponsored child and his or her family better, but also to deepen your understanding of what sponsorship does and how your support is really making a difference. It will also be an incredible adventure. Visiting your sponsored child is a truly wonderful way to celebrate your gift of sponsorship and create memories that you’ll both keep in your hearts forever.



### YOU’VE DECIDED TO VISIT YOUR SPONSORED CHILD. NOW WHAT?

We welcome any sponsor who is interested in visiting their sponsored child to do so. However, at ChildFund, we take child protection seriously, and we’re committed to keeping the children in our programs safe. For this reason, we require that all planned trips to visit sponsored children go through an approval process, including a background check for all visitors 18 and over.

#### Here’s Where to Start:

- ✓ **Contact Sponsor Care** at 1-800-776-6767.  
All visits must be planned through ChildFund and approved in advance. Our Sponsor Care team will help facilitate the background screening and approval, and then they’ll put you in touch with our country offices to work out the details of the visit.
- ✓ **Plan ahead.** Keep in mind the approval process may take approximately four months to complete, so plan accordingly.
- ✓ **Complete these forms and have them notarized:** Request to Visit My Sponsored Child, the Disclosure Statement and the Child Protection Release Form for any individual 18 or over. A background check is required and is good for 12 months from the date of approval. Sponsor Care will provide these forms to you.
- ✓ **Send those forms and a check** for \$50 (or call to pay by card) for each background check, along with a legible copy of a state-issued photo ID or passport for each visitor, to:

Sponsor Care Child Protection  
ChildFund International  
P.O. Box 85066  
Richmond, VA 23261-5066  
[www.ChildFund.org](http://www.ChildFund.org)  
Fax: 804-756-2783

### SOME PRACTICAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

**Will I be able to visit any country where ChildFund has sponsored children?** Yes, but do monitor U.S. Department of State security alerts. If an unsafe situation arises once the process is underway, we’ll let you know.

**When is a good time to visit?** In general, any time of year is fine. However, on weekends and holidays our country offices are closed, and staff cannot accommodate visitors. Please provide us with flexible dates so that in-country staff can help make things work the best for everyone concerned.

**Why does this process take so long?** Coordination takes time. Many of our program areas are in remote locations, and it can take time for our country office to arrange for translators, transportation and lodging for the sponsored child, staff and any family members. The required background screening for visitors may also take several weeks.

**Is a last-minute trip possible?** If you are traveling to your child’s country with less than four months to process your request, call Sponsor Care at 1-800-776-6767 immediately. We will do our best to accommodate your request if possible.

**What expenses are involved?** You are responsible for all of your travel expenses, including fares, lodging and meals, as well as any fares and meals for the child and the ChildFund staff escort, which will need to be paid to the in-country staff during the visit. Visa requirements and fees will also be your responsibility.

**Where will I meet my sponsored child?** This varies depending on the program area, but most meetings are held at ChildFund’s country office, at your hotel or at the child’s program office. Arrangements will be made for you once your trip has been approved. Please understand that home visits are not permitted.

**Will I be escorted?** Yes. A ChildFund staff member will accompany you and help with translation and communication. And while you will probably see some sights along the way, unfortunately, ChildFund staff members are not available as tour guides.

**How long will I get to visit with my sponsored child?** This will depend a little bit on you! An hour or two is usually sufficient, but you may prefer to stay for the day. Our country office staff can suggest activities that will create a memorable experience for you and your sponsored child.