

# Family Living

## U.S. adopting more babies abroad

### 17 Percent of Children Adopted by American Parents in 1996 Were Born Abroad

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

After 10 years of infertility treatments, Susan Hutler desperately wanted a baby and finally turned to adoption. But adopting an American baby seemed filled with complications, so like thousands of other would-be parents, she looked abroad.

"We could have tried to adopt privately, which would mean we would have to find a birth mother who was interested in giving her baby to us," said Hutler, a Washington attorney. "You're really kind of in a position of having to compete with other prospective parents and then convince them that you are in fact worthy to parent this child. Frankly... I just did not have the emotional energy to go through that."

In July, Hutler and her husband brought home a 1-year-old girl from Russia. "It's pretty quick and you are guaranteed success," she said.

More than 17 percent of children adopted by American parents in 1996 were born abroad, as the number of domestic adoptions fall and international adoptions skyrocket, according to a report released Tuesday by the National Council for

Adoption.

For infants, children under 2, international adoptions account for nearly a third of the total, the report said.

Meanwhile, between 1992 and 1996, domestic infant adoptions fell by 11 percent, a decrease experts attribute in part to fewer single mothers giving babies up for adoption.

The council, a private group that advocates adoptions, based its report on a survey of the states and data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Adoption data is notoriously hard to come by, and the new report is among the most comprehensive to date, experts said.

The report looked at 54,496 adoptions in 1996 involving U.S.-born children and found more than half came from the foster care system. The overall adoptions of American children edged down from 55,706 in 1992, according to the council, which did similar surveys in 1982, 1986 and 1992. At the same time, about 11,000 children were adopted from other countries in 1996, up from 6,500 in 1992, the report said. By last year, the number of foreign adoptions topped 15,000.

In 1992, international adoptions accounted for just 10.5 percent of all unrelated adoptions, those that do not involve family members. By 1996, that rose to 17.5 percent.

While there are more American children born to unmarried parents than ever before, more single mothers are opting to keep their babies, leading to a shortage of infants available for adoption, experts said.



The Christmas tree in Pioneer Square stands tall and beautiful to commemorate the beginning of the Christmas season. It was erected Thanksgiving evening to a large crowd of onlookers and well wishers.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON

## New immunization rule for kids

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Parents of future seventh graders (children in second through sixth grade) recently received notification of the change in Oregon school immunization laws. Beginning in the fall of 2000, seventh graders will need three doses of hepatitis B, a second dose of measles containing vaccine (usually MMR), and chickenpox (varicella) vaccine, if they have not had chickenpox disease, to stay in school.

It takes approximately six months and three clinic visits to complete these doses so families are encouraged to get an early start. Parents should

contact their regular doctor, nurse or health clinic. If that is not possible they can plan to visit special school immunization clinics which have been scheduled in various locations around the Portland/Multnomah County area.

December 2<sup>nd</sup> Whitaker Middle School, 5700 N.E. 39<sup>th</sup>, 3-7 pm  
 December 9<sup>th</sup> Hillsdale Community/Lane, 6948 SW Capital Hwy., 3-7 pm.  
 December 16<sup>th</sup> Reynolds Middle School, 1200 NE 201 st Ave., 3-7 pm.  
 January 4<sup>th</sup> Roosevelt High School, 6941 N. Central St., 3-7 pm.  
 January 6<sup>th</sup> Parkrose High School, 12003 N.E. Shaver St., 3-7 pm.  
 Brentwood Darlington/Lane, 7200 S.E. 60<sup>th</sup> Ave., 3-7 pm.

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## America's kids facing obstacles

### Poor schools, lack of health care among 'ten Critical threats'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teen pregnancy, abuse and neglect at home, inadequate child care, poor schools and lack of health care are among the biggest dangers threatening America's children, according to a new report. The report, "Ten Critical Threats To

America's Children: Warning Signs for the Next Millennium," also lists such threats as substance abuse, poverty, absent parents, crime and dangers in the environment.

The study is the work of the National School Boards Association, the National League of Cities, Hollywood, Fla.-based Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital and Youth Crime Watch of America. It was released today at a news conference in Washington, D.C.

"The problems confronting our children truly are challenges to all of America," said Mary Ellen Maxwell,

president of the National School Boards Association. "Either we meet these challenges or they will become obstacles to our future."

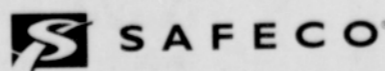
Dr. Arnold Tanis, a fellow with the American Academy of Pediatrics, said, "We want to see these issues addressed, and one way to do it is make people aware of them and begin a national dialogue."

The threats, which are not ranked, were compiled through research and interviews with experts, child advocacy organizations and government agencies.



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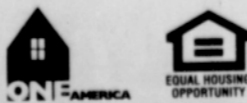
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