

Studying in Canada as a minor

Find out what a minor child needs to do to study in Canada if they’re not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

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Who is a minor child

Each province and territory decides the age when a person becomes an adult. This is known as the age of majority. A person under the age of majority is a “minor child”.

Province or territory	Age of majority
Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan	18
British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Yukon	19

Caring for a minor child in Canada

The parents or legal guardians must prove the minor child will have the care and support they need during their stay in Canada. Minor children under the age of 17 must either

- come with their parent or legal guardian or
- have a custodian in Canada

A custodian is a responsible adult, who is a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident, who will take care of and support the minor child. A custodian is optional for minors 17 years of age and older, but an officer can request one on a case-by-case basis.

How to appoint a custodian

To appoint a custodian, send us the [Custodianship Declaration form](#), along with the minor child’s study permit application.

The 2 pages of the form look similar, but

- the first page needs to be signed by the custodian and notarized (certified by a lawyer or notary) **in Canada**
- the second page needs to be signed by the parents or legal guardians of the minor child and notarized **in their home country**

Find out if your child needs a study permit

The following table summarizes whether a minor child at the primary and secondary school level needs a study permit to enrol in a school. School authorities may also use the table to help determine when school fees apply.

If the child is...	Documents needed	Study permit required
a Canadian	Passport, citizenship card or birth certificate	No
a permanent resident	Record of Landing (IMM 1000), Confirmation of Permanent Residence (IMM 5292) or Permanent Resident Card	No

If the child is...	Documents needed	Study permit required
a foreign national (either inside or coming to Canada) accompanied by a parent who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada	Child’s passport, child’s birth certificate, or Permanent Resident Card	No
a foreign national coming to Canada with a parent who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> will have temporary resident status as a visitor once they’re in Canada does not have a work or study permit 	Child’s passport	Yes
already in Canada with a parent who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has temporary resident status as a visitor does not have a work or study permit 	Child’s passport	Yes
a foreign national coming to Canada and is accompanied by a parent with a study or work permit	Child’s passport	Yes
a foreign national coming to Canada and is not accompanied by a parent	Child’s passport	Yes
already in Canada with a parent who has a study or work permit or already in Canada but neither parent is in Canada	Child’s passport. The child may have a visitor record. The parent has a study or work permit. Footnote1 It’s recommended that the child get a study permit, even though it’s not required.	No
a refugee claimant or their parents are refugees or refugee claimants	Determination of Eligibility letter from IRCC. Child’s passport, or any available travel or identity documents. May also have an expired IRCC document.	No

If the child is...	Documents needed	Study permit required
in Canada without status	Child's passport or child listed on a parent's passport, or any available travel or identity documents. May also have an expired IRCC document.	No

Why get a study permit if the minor doesn't need one

Having a study permit means, if the minor wants to, they may be able to

- [remain in school when they're no longer a minor](#)
- get a secondary school [co-op work permit](#)
- [have access to social services in some provinces or territories](#)

Applying for a study permit for a minor

Generally, if you're applying for a study permit for a minor (even at the primary or secondary school level), you need to provide a letter of acceptance from the educational institution in Canada that the child is going to. You may provide either the original letter of acceptance or an electronic version.

Minor children don't need a study permit for programs that are **6 months or less**, but may still apply for one before entering Canada.

Minor children who want to study for **6 months or more** must apply for a study permit before they enter Canada.

If you're a lone parent applying for a minor, you may need additional documents when you submit the application. [Find out what documents you may need](#).

Outside Canada

Minor children who want to study in Canada must [apply for a study permit](#) before they enter Canada. This includes minor children who come with parents who are applying for a study or work permit. In this situation, a letter of acceptance is not required for the child's study permit application.

Already in Canada

Minors already in Canada should apply for a study permit. In some provinces or territories, they may need one to receive social services.

Minor children who are already in Canada may study **without a study permit** if they

- want to go to pre-school, kindergarten, or primary or secondary school and have a parent who is a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
- are refugees or refugee claimants whose parents are refugees or refugee claimants
- came to Canada as a visitor for a course or program of studies of 6 months or less
- will study in a course or program of 6 months or less
- are in Canada by themselves on a visitor status
- have a parent (biological or adoptive) who is authorized to work or study in Canada, including temporary residents who are
 - work permit holders
 - study permit holders
 - not physically in Canada
 - [business visitors](#) and others authorized to [work without a work permit](#)

Minors who don't have a study permit must have [valid](#) visitor status during their stay in Canada.

Applying for a study permit in Canada

Minor children need a letter of acceptance if they're

- in Canada with a family member **and**
- that family member had a work or study permit approved **before** they entered Canada

Study permits for primary school students are issued for a period of 1 year and can be renewed.

Study permits for students enrolled in secondary school (grades 9 to 12 in all provinces and territories except Quebec, and grades 9 to 11 in Quebec) can be issued for the full length of the intended period of study at a secondary school in Canada (maximum of 4 years).

Extending a study permit in Canada

Minor children need a letter of acceptance to [extend their study permit](#) inside Canada. The length of a minor's study permit is based on the letter of acceptance.

Make sure to apply for the new permit at least 90 days before the current permit expires. You can find your permit's expiry date on the study permit itself.

If their study permit expires

Minor children must keep [valid](#) status during their stay in Canada. Usually, this means having a valid study permit. If your minor child is allowed to study in Canada without a study permit, then they must have a valid [visitor visa](#) or [Electronic Travel Authorization \(eTA\)](#).

If you haven't applied to renew their study permit before it expires, they'll lose their student status and have 90 days to apply to restore it. They're allowed to continue studying until a decision is made.