



# International Adoptees in ESL Settings

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# Introduction

- ▶ Methodology: Literature Review
- ▶ Purpose:
  - ▶ a) to examine vital facts about internationally adopted (IA) students;
  - ▶ b) to identify main issues that educators are likely to encounter when working with this group of students;
  - ▶ c) to provide teachers with ideas for creating a positive classroom environment and parental involvement opportunities.

# Background: Terminology

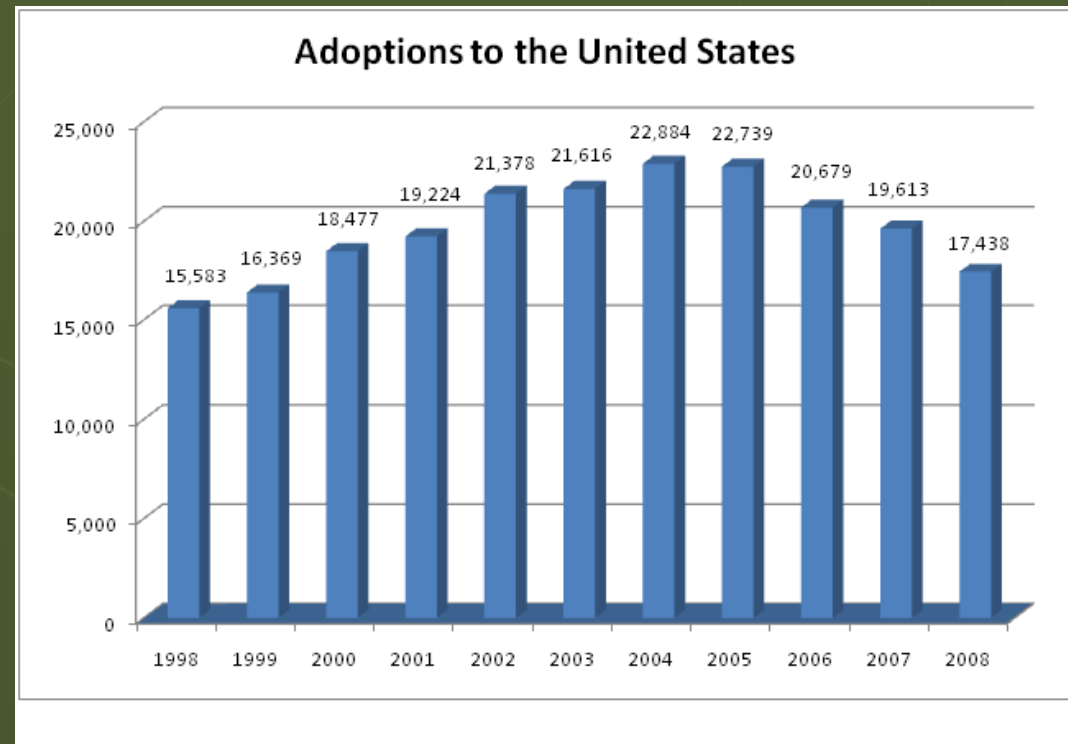
- ▶ Internationally adopted (IA) vs. cross-culturally adopted
- ▶ 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption (about 75 countries)
- ▶ Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (provides for the implementation of the Hague Convention)
- ▶ Child Citizenship Act of 2000

# Background: Adoption Statistics

## Top 5: Fiscal Year 2008

1. Guatemala – 4,123
2. China – 3,909
3. Russia – 1,861
4. Ethiopia – 1,725
5. South Korea – 1,065

**NOTE:** All statistics given correspond with the U.S. Government *fiscal year*, which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. For example: Adoption statistics for 2008 = Number of adoptions from October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008.



U.S. Department of State, Fiscal Year 2008  
Adoption Statistics, <http://adoption.state.gov>

# Faces of Adoption

## *Georgia*



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

## *Ethiopia*



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

## *Russia*



## *Bulgaria*



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

"We wanted to be parents, and there are millions of children in Africa that need parents," says Benjamin. "It seemed like an easy decision for us."

[www.adoptionassociates.net](http://www.adoptionassociates.net)

## *Armenia*



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

# Characteristics of IA Children

Elevated risk for a variety of difficulties:

- ▶ Health;
- ▶ Cognitive development;
- ▶ Language development;
- ▶ Attachment to caregivers;
- ▶ Adaptational difficulties typical for immigrant students (not adopted).

“Most interventions currently used with IA children and families lack empirical validation” (Welsh, Viana, Petrill, & Mathias, 2007, p. 286).

# Characteristics of IA Children (cont.)

## ▶ Global developmental delay

“At the time of adoption, children adopted from orphanages typically demonstrate delays in all developmental domains, including gross and fine motor abilities, language, cognition, and social-emotional development” (Welsh et. al., 2007, p. 287).

▶ Longitudinal studies compared verbal and cognitive development of IA children and children adopted domestically at birth – statistically significant difference.

# Characteristics of IA Children (cont.)

## Predictors of post-adoptive adjustment:

- ▶ Exposure to neglect, abuse or deprivation
- ▶ Poor pre- and post-natal care
- ▶ Age at adoption
- ▶ Medical and mental health difficulties
- ▶ Only 43 % percent of children were accurately diagnosed with developmental delays pre-adoption – implications for educators (Boone, Hostetter, & Weitzman, 2003)
- ▶ Regional differences in patterns of risk
- ▶ Relatively high socio-economic status of IA families is not always a protective factor (Mainmer, Gilman, & Ames, 1998, as cited in Welsh et. al., 2007, p. 287).



# Characteristics of IA Children (cont.)

## Socio-emotional and behavioral difficulties

- ▶ Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) is a complex psychiatric illness characterized by serious problems in emotional attachments to others. It usually manifests itself by age 5.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2008). *Fact for Families*, 85. [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

# Interventions for IA Children

- ▶ Parent support groups
- ▶ Medical interventions (adoption medicine as a subspecialty)
- ▶ Behavioral interventions
- ▶ Psycho-educational services
- ▶ Classroom interventions



# Classroom Interventions

- ▶ Predictable and stable environment
- ▶ Awareness of ...
  - developmental stages
  - educational background
  - degree of literacy in the native language
- ▶ Placement considerations
- ▶ Keeping parents informed (there is so much they don't know about their child)
- ▶ Learning from parents
- ▶ Sensitivity to parental stress

# THANK YOU!

## Gracias

(+ MANY more)

## Спасибо

谢谢你

## Amesegëñallô

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## 감사합니다.