

10 Things to know about



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HOME ADVANTAGE

Reforming Jamaica's
Adoption System



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by telephone at
(876) 970-3447 or (876) 970-2910

1 NON-KIN ADOPTIONS ARE RARE DESPITE HIGH DEMAND

Although more than 150 approved adopters are waiting, only about 10–20 state-ward adoptions occur each year.



2 JAMAICA VIEWS ADOPTION AS A LAST RESORT MEASURE



In practice, adoption is pursued only after prolonged and often unrealistic reunification efforts, rather than as a parallel permanency option for children who cannot safely return home.

3 THERE IS NO OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF A CHILD'S 'BEST INTERESTS'



Different laws, institutions, and practices apply the standard inconsistently, often deferring to adult preferences over children's long-term developmental needs.

4 PRIVATE NON-KIN ADOPTIONS EXCEED STATE FACILITATED ADOPTIONS



This indicates that early placement with adopters is feasible in Jamaica, but is blocked within the formal child-protection system.

5 ADOPTION OUTCOMES STEM FROM CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE GAPS



High caseloads, weak oversight, and administrative bottlenecks delay permanency long before cases ever reach the Adoption Desk.

6 ADOPTION AND CHILD PROTECTION ARE GOVERNED BY SEPARATE LAWS



The Child Care and Protection Act (2004) does not reference adoption at all. Its lack of integration with the Adoption Act means that adoption as a core permanency option is treated as a last resort, rather than as an integrated pathway within the child-protection continuum.

7 JAMAICA'S ADOPTION LAW IS OUTDATED



The Adoption Act was passed in 1958, and has not been updated since, while the UK law on which it was based has been reformed three times.

8 MANY REFORMS NEED NO NEW LEGISLATION



Clear timelines, concurrent planning, better data systems, and stronger oversight can be implemented through policy directives and resourcing now.

9 RELIABLE DATA ON ADOPTION IS LACKING



The state does not systematically collect, clean, or publish adoption data, leaving policy decisions without an empirical foundation.

10 FOREIGN ADOPTION OF CHILDREN IS TIGHTLY RESTRICTED



Only Commonwealth citizens, and citizens of the US, Sweden, and Denmark may adopt, limiting intercountry and diaspora pathways.