

Border Crossing Information – 7th & 8th Grade French Trip to Montréal

As we've been planning the trip to Montreal, many have asked about Canadian border crossing policy and whether or not a passport is required. To answer your question: **No, a passport is NOT required.** What is required, is a certified copy of your child's birth certificate. In addition, a passport is not required for adults who are planning to chaperone our trip. For adults, a U.S. Government-issued photo ID (e.g. Driver's License) and proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a birth certificate is sufficient identification to cross the border. If you and/or your child do have valid passports, it is recommended that you bring them.

Here are the specifics from the U.S. Department of State website:

US and Canadian immigration authorities are relaxing the new travel document requirements as they pertain to children.

In a change from earlier plans, U.S. and Canadian citizens ages 15 or younger with parental consent will be allowed to cross the borders at land and sea entry points with certified copies of their birth certificates rather than passports.

U.S. and Canadian citizens ages 16 through 18 traveling with school, religious, cultural or athletic groups and under adult supervision will also be allowed to travel with only their birth certificates.

As customs officers are always on the lookout for missing children, being prepared to answer the custom officer's questions is critical. Specifically,

- * Have children's ID ready to present to customs officer.
- * Divorced parents who share custody of their children should carry copies of the legal custody documents.
- * The Canada Border Services Agency suggests identification such as a birth certificate, baptismal certificate, passport, or immigration document. If none of these are available, get a letter stating that you are the children's parent or guardian from your doctor or lawyer, or from the hospital where the children were born.
- * Adults who are not parents or guardians should have written permission from the parents or guardians to supervise the children, including the name and contact information of the parent / guardian
- * Even if you are not divorced from the child's other parent, bring the other parent's written permission to take the child over the border.
Include contact information so border guard can call the other parent if necessary.
- * Adults / Guardians should travel in the same vehicle as their children when arriving at the border.
- * Children old enough to speak for themselves may be encouraged to do so by the customs officer, so be prepared to let older children answer the officer's questions.

For more information, visit...

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1082.html