



Are your children Swiss or can they become Swiss?

The Swiss Citizenship Act, as amended ([SCA; SR 141.0](#)), which came into force on 1 January 2018, provides that citizenship may be acquired from birth and lays down the applicable rules.

1. Acquisition by descent

The following may acquire Swiss citizenship automatically from birth:

- 1.1 A child whose parents are married and whose father or mother is a Swiss citizen.
- 1.2 A child of a Swiss mother who is not married to the father.
- 1.3 A non-Swiss minor with a Swiss father who is not married to the non-Swiss mother, provided that the father acknowledged paternity before the child attained majority (and thus established a full parent-child relationship that can be entered in the Swiss civil status register), or a paternity ruling has been made. The father must be a Swiss citizen at the time the child is born and paternity acknowledged. The child will then acquire Swiss citizenship retrospectively to the date of birth. These rules only apply to children who were born after 1 January 2006. Children born before this date may apply for simplified naturalisation (see section 2.2 below). Alternatively, they may automatically acquire Swiss citizenship through the subsequent marriage of their parents (see section 1.4 below).
- 1.4 A non-Swiss child born before 1 January 2006 to a Swiss father who is not married to the mother may automatically acquire Swiss citizenship if the parents subsequently marry, provided that:
 - the father was a Swiss citizen at the time the child was born and has not since lost his Swiss citizenship; and
 - the parent-child relationship is established before the child attains majority (through acknowledgement of paternity or under a paternity ruling); and
 - the parents marry before the child attains majority.

2. Simplified naturalisation

- 2.1 A non-Swiss child with a Swiss mother, who is married to a non-Swiss national and held Swiss citizenship before or at the time the child was born, may apply for simplified naturalisation under Article 51 paragraph 1 SCA, provided that the child has close ties to Switzerland. The application may include any children who are minors on the date of application.

Simplified naturalisation is no longer available to the grandchildren of Swiss women who lost their Swiss citizenship prior to or at the time of their children's births.

Article 51 paragraph 1 SCA applies in all circumstances where a mother is married to a non-Swiss national and is unable to pass her Swiss citizenship onto her children, irrespective of how she acquired it. However, Article 51 paragraph 1 SCA does not apply to mothers who have lost their Swiss citizenship through forfeiture or gave up their citizenship prior to the birth of the child.

Further information is set out in 651/11 of chapter 6 of the new Nationality Manual (de, fr, it), which took effect on 1 January 2018) and is available at

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/rechtsgrundlagen/weisungen/buergerrecht/hb-bueg20-kap6-d.pdf>

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/fr/data/rechtsgrundlagen/weisungen/buergerrecht/hb-bueg20-kap6-f.pdf>

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/it/data/rechtsgrundlagen/weisungen/buergerrecht/hb-bueg20-kap6-i.pdf>

2.2 Children born out of wedlock to a Swiss father and a non-Swiss mother prior to 1 January 2006 did not automatically acquire Swiss citizenship. However, children may apply for simplified naturalisation under Article 51 paragraph 2 SCA, provided that the Swiss father has acknowledged paternity (see section 1.3). Applicants must also provide evidence of close ties to Switzerland.

3. Reinstatement

A foreign-born child who is a citizen of another country in addition to holding Swiss citizenship will lose their Swiss citizenship on reaching the age of 25 unless their birth has been registered with a Swiss authority in Switzerland or abroad (e.g. Swiss embassy or consulate general, Swiss registry office) or they have declared in writing that they wish to retain their Swiss citizenship (Art. 7 SCA). Children may apply for their Swiss citizenship to be reinstated within ten years of the date of their 25th birthday, provided they have close ties with Switzerland. Once the 10-year period has elapsed, the child may only apply for reinstatement if they have been resident in Switzerland for a period of three years (Art. 27 SCA).

4. Adoption

A non-Swiss minor adopted by a Swiss citizen will acquire their adoptive parent's cantonal and communal citizenship and thus become a Swiss citizen, provided the adoption is recognised as a full adoption under Swiss law.

Please note

Swiss law recognises dual citizenship, which means that you may, in principle, keep your original citizenship. Acquisition of Swiss citizenship may, however, result in loss of your original citizenship if the law of your country of origin so requires. Relevant official information can be obtained from the authorities of the country of origin.

5. Fees

You can obtain information on the fees payable for processing naturalisation applications (fees charged by the Swiss Confederation and, where applicable, by the canton and Swiss representation) from the relevant Swiss representation abroad (www.fdfa.admin.ch > Travel advice & representations).

6. Do you have any questions?

The relevant Swiss representation abroad and the FDFA Helpline (www.helpline-fdfa.ch) will be happy to provide further assistance.

General information, in particular regarding procedures and the meaning of 'close ties to Switzerland', is also available on the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) website: www.sem.admin.ch > Integration & naturalisation > [How do I become a Swiss citizen?](#)

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