

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What should I expect when I receive a letter from my sponsored child?

- **Age to grade ratio may be different in their communication ability.** The children in our program may enter into our schools a little later in age so the grade to age ratio may be a little off from what we experience in the States. Be mindful that if your child is older in age, they may not be as developed in education as we would expect in the States.
- **English is our students' second language.** They learn English in school but it takes them time to learn the language well enough to write it well. Be mindful that if your sponsored child isn't writing in perfect English sentences that they may be shy about writing in their second language to a native speaker. Their letters might even be more brief or not as detailed because of this.
- **Our staff may assist them with their letters.** Since it takes the children in our program some time to learn how to speak English as well as write in English, we sometimes have our staff help the children write their letters. They will ask the children what they want to say and will help them put it down on paper while the child draws a picture. You may see on a letter, Assisted by _ Teacher.
- **You might see the same fill-in-the-blank sentences.** Sometimes the children in our program don't know what to write about so our teachers will write example sentences on the board to help them fill-in-the-blanks. If you sponsor a few children in our program, you might receive letters with the same fill-in-the-blank sentence. This is due to our staff helping them know what types of things they might want to say in their letters. Keep in mind that for younger ones, it might be easier to copy the board rather than come up with original ideas of what to say.
- **Your sponsored child might repeat themselves.** We understand that at times, it feels like your sponsored child will repeat themselves in different letters. This is mostly because they are still learning how to write letters or are unsure what to write about.

2. How long can my letter to my sponsored child be?

- 1200 character limit

3. Will I receive confirmation that my sponsored child received my letter?

- Rest assured that if your child is still in our program, that he or she will receive your letter. At times, it may take longer if the child has moved from one community to another, but your letter will reach your sponsored child.

4. Is my letter an email? Does my child receive my emails?

The letters you write are on our online system, but the children receive a printed copy of the letter. We do not connect sponsor and child via email.

5. Is the sponsorship portal mobile friendly?

Unfortunately, at this time, the sponsorship portal where you write letters is not mobile friendly. We are actively working on a new system where this will be an option.

6. Can I send a package to my sponsored child?

Due to the overall fairness of the children, we do not allow sponsors to give gifts to their children. We encourage sponsors to send letters and pictures only. You can view our gift policy on our website.

7. Can I send a picture to my sponsored child?

- Unfortunately, at this time, you cannot upload a picture to our letter writing portal. If you or a friend are visiting Zambia, you can deliver a letter/picture in person.
- Please take careful note of our picture criteria: Do not include material possessions in the pictures (cars, big houses, extravagant family vacations, etc.), people in swimwear, short dresses, skirts, or shorts. Please avoid sending pictures that may accentuate the economic differences and be aware of what is in the background of the picture.
- If our staff find any pictures inappropriate, they will not be sent.

8. Can I write directly to my sponsored child?

- Routing the letters through Family Legacy is the best and most efficient way to handle correspondence. It allows us to monitor the content and explain any cultural differences that come through.
- Zambia does not have a mail system like we do in the United States nor do they have an address system where the children live that would be effective to receive letters.
- It allows us to protect the privacy and personal boundaries of the child and of the sponsor.

9. Can I connect with my sponsored child through social media like Facebook, Twitter, email, Skype, etc?

- We desire for you to have a good relationship with your sponsored child, but ask that you refrain from reaching out to your child in ways other than letters through Family Legacy. If you are contacted by your child outside of Family Legacy, please do not respond, but let us know about the contact. We want to protect the child and sponsor.
- At times, people who know the child may create an account in the child's name in order to ask for money.
- We cannot protect the child or the sponsor if the communications happen outside of the system we have in place. By us being involved in the communication process, we are able to help navigate the cultural divide and avoid something inadvertently insensitive or inappropriate being written.
- We appreciate your willingness to respect our communication policies and procedures.

10. Why do my letters get edited?

- It is our responsibility to protect the child and the sponsor. If the guidelines we have laid out are not followed, we will remove the sentences from the sponsor's letter.

11. How often should I write my sponsored child?

- You are welcome to write your sponsored child as many times as you would like; however, due to the fairness of the children who don't receive letters from their sponsors very often, we ask that you limit it to a maximum of once per month.
- We would love for you to write at least 2-3 times a year to encourage your sponsored child and let him/her know you care and are supporting him/her.

12. How often will I hear from my sponsored child?

- Our children have the opportunity to write 2-3 letters each year. This is based on unexpected events that may occur, (like a cholera outbreak or an election year with students being out of school more than normal). However, please note that if your sponsored child is out of school for any reason during the letter writing week at school, he or she may not have the opportunity to write the letter. Our staff do everything in their power to make sure each child writes, but this doesn't happen 100% of the time.
- If you write a letter to your child, you will receive a response back; therefore, will receive more letters in return.

13. Why doesn't my sponsored child write longer letters?

- Many children in Zambia begin school later in their young life, age 8, 9, 10, etc. They're having to catch up, but have missed the pivotal developmental years of education.
- If students started school at a later age they may not feel comfortable writing a long letter yet. Even if they have been in school for a couple of years they may still feel more comfortable drawing a picture. That is also why you may see that a teacher has helped write their letter.

14. Why didn't my sponsored child answer the questions asked?

- Some possible explanations include that the question may have just been overlooked, the child didn't understand the question, cultural differences, or a new staff member assisted the child and missed the question.
- You'll have greater success if you only ask 1-2 questions, number them, and make them separate from the rest of the letter to help the questions stand out.
- The child may not open up due to fear of cultural stigma or repercussions. Please be sensitive to the child's personal life and not press for more details than he or she is willing to share.

15. Can I ask if my child believes in Jesus or is a Christian?

Yes. We are a Christ-centered ministry; however a child does not have to be Christian to be in the program. Each child has the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel.

16. What is the school year like in Zambia?

January through December with holiday breaks in April, August, and December.

17. What is the weather like in Zambia?

- May - August it can be a little chilly and dry
- September - October is more hot and dry
- November through April is their rainy season so they will experience hot temperatures, humidity and lots of rain.
- It is not as common to use the terms summer, fall, winter, and spring, so if you talk about these seasons, include what the weather is like during that season.

18. What if I have multiple children I sponsor?

For those of you who sponsor multiple children, please try to vary your letters from child to child. The children most likely attend the same school or are friends; therefore, they might know that you are writing the exact same thing to all your sponsored children.

19. Why does it take so long to receive a letter?

- During the school term (not during holidays) the letters sponsors write to their sponsored children are exported from our system and our staff in Zambia then print and distribute those to the staff members at the schools.
- It takes several weeks for our staff to print, distribute, the children to write letters, the main office in Zambia to receive them, upload them to Dropbox, the stateside staff to review the letters from the children and then get uploaded to the sponsor's page.