



*Embassy of the United States of America
Bridgetown, Barbados*

Q: I applied for a visa for a child that is not my own (i.e. my niece, nephew, cousin, grandchild or family-friend) and the visa was denied. The Consular Officer told me that "children qualify for visas through their parents. If a child's parents do not qualify for a visa, usually the child does not qualify." If I am the one paying for the trip of the child, and I have a visa, why was the visa denied?

A: Generally minor children will be issued a visa if one of their parents, biological or legally adopted, has a valid U.S. visa and previous travel to the United States using that visa for its intended purpose. It is assumed that minor children are financially dependent on their parents and if parents demonstrate sufficient ties to qualify for a visa, the children will usually qualify for a visa without a problem.

Occasionally a relative/friend will want to take a child, other than their own child, to the United States for a visit. This relative/friend will have a current visa and apply for a visa for the child; however, the parents of this child do not have visas. The parents may have been denied visas in the past, or may have never applied. It is difficult for the Embassy to issue a visa to a child without the parents. In such instances, the Consular Officer does not know exactly what the situation is, or where the parents are. Hence, the Officer will be cautious and likely have many questions about the application. Under such circumstances, a child's visa may be denied or put on hold to request further documentation about the child's parents. The U.S. Embassy is very careful about issuing visas to minor children without the parents due to many concerns ranging from illegal immigration to child trafficking.

The U.S. Embassy receives many documents in support of children's applications, including affidavits and letters from the parents, letters from schools, and parents' passports without U.S. visas. Please note that it is important to submit the child's birth certificate, documentation of family income/savings and at least one parent's passport with a valid U.S. visa in support of a child's visa application.