In 1979, Holt began serving children and families in India through partnerships with local leaders and child care organizations — developing family preservation, foster and child care, educational sponsorship, and domestic and international adoption programs. Since that time, we’ve helped unite more than 1,480 children from India with stable, loving families in the U.S.
Because of Holt’s long history and extensive programs serving Indian children, we have a strong and long-lasting relationship with many legacy partner agencies in India. We also have worked with India’s central adoption authority since its inception, and are uniquely qualified to assist with international adoption.

The Children Who Need Families Today
While in recent years India has experienced significant social and economic growth, thousands of children are still growing up without a family. India has a very active domestic adoption program that places thousands of children each year, but many are unlikely to join an adoptive family in India due to their age, gender or special needs. For these children, their greatest chance at a stable, loving family is through international adoption.

Age: Most children adopted internationally from India are at least 2-to-3 years old at the time of placement. However children in the greatest need for families are ages 6+ and Holt is actively seeking families for them. For these children, simply being older than 6 or part of a sibling group may be considered a special need.

Gender: In India, families often prefer to adopt girls. As a result, more boys are released for international adoption than girls. While families may be open to either gender, families that are open to a boy may be matched with a child more quickly.

Eligibility: Before pursuing international adoption for a child, India strives to place children with domestic adoptive families in India — allowing children to grow up in both the country and culture of their birth. If this is not possible, priority is then given to Indian families who are living in the U.S., though applicants of non-Indian descent are also eligible to adopt from India. For the India program, the age of prospective adoptive parents determines the age of child they are eligible to adopt. India mandates a minimum 25-year age difference between the younger parent and the child, and the maximum combined age of the parents must be 90 years for a child under 4 years old. For children ages 4-8, the limit is 100 years combined age. And for children 8+, parents may have a combined age of 110 years.

Children With Special Needs
Most of the children waiting for families through international adoption have moderate-to-major special needs. India has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world, so most of these children are recovering from the effects of malnutrition, such as being small for their age, and will have to “catch up” once they are united with their adoptive family.

Some children may have physical or cognitive needs that require extra time, attention, medical care, education plans or advocacy. The following are some of the special needs children waiting for families may have:

- Developmental delays
- Very low birth weight, stunting or other nutrition-related health problems
- Cleft lip and palate, vision impairments or heart conditions
- HIV+, Hepatitis B or other blood condition
- Cerebral palsy
- Family medical conditions that might be hereditary, often of a neurological or cognitive nature
- Birth mother substance abuse or little-to-no prenatal care

While children wait to be united with their adoptive families, they live in private- or government-run childcare facilities that are licensed by India’s central adoption authority, CARA.

Learn More: If you are interested in learning more about children in India who are waiting for families through international adoption and would like to schedule a free consultation, please contact Emily Lund at emilyl@holtinternational.org or by phone at 541-687-2202 x145.