

Frequently Asked Questions:

Communication With My Child:

Q: Am I able to communicate directly with my sponsored child?

A: Yes! Please send all correspondence to your sponsored child through AOET~USA's office at:

**AOET~USA Communications
PO Box 19006
Portland, OR 97280**

The children do not have a post office to receive their mail, so we will forward the letters to the appropriate AOET child welfare office in Africa for delivery. The children are always eager to receive letters & pictures from their sponsors, so we encourage you to write often. Please be sure to include the child's name and ACS, KCS or HES number on all correspondence to ensure it gets to the correct recipient.

Q: May I give my sponsored child my address for correspondence?

A: In an effort to protect privacy for both sponsors and children, all communication must go through AOET offices. Please do not include your address, phone number or email address in any correspondence with your sponsored child. Do not mention your child visiting you in America, or that you will help him/her get here. For example, if you asked a child if they would like to visit America, it would likely cause confusion because they would view the question as a promise for them to really visit. Your sponsored child's status in the program may be at risk if these guidelines aren't followed.

Q: May I send pictures of myself/my family to my sponsored child?

A: Absolutely! Just like you, the children love putting a name to a face, and would be excited to receive photos of you and your family. We ask that you do not send photos that include expressions of physical wealth (large homes, cars, boats, etc) or immodest dress (such as bathing suits). Pictures taken of you while visiting places is a great way to introduce the children to places they have never seen.

Q: May I send gifts specifically to my sponsored child?

A: Sponsor generosity is a wonderful thing and we are so thankful for your heart for your child. However, it is incredibly difficult to track and transport individual gifts. We also find that the best way to support children is through community events that encourage **all** of the children and families in the program. Therefore, we ask that you consider contributing to Christmas or birthday events, or consider a general donation to AOET in your child's honor.

If you would like to send something additional to your child, we ask that – at largest -- it fits in a 9"x12" manila envelope. In addition to sending letters and photos, we recommend sending items such as seeds, school supplies, socks, underwear, stickers or small books.

Q: How often should I expect correspondence from my child?

A: We do our best to support your relationship with your sponsored child, and will pass on personal letters, community & family information, and general updates from our office. We have found that children tend to be the most responsive when they receive letters of encouragement from you. We do our best to guarantee that you will receive at least one letter a year from your sponsored child, but circumstances can make this difficult.

Q: May I visit my sponsored child?

A: Yes, and we encourage it! By being part of an AOET Volunteer team, you can have the chance to meet and spend quality time with your sponsored child. We ask that you do this through an AOET trip and not independently, if possible. Contact us at info@aoetusa.com to learn more about our Volunteer Teams.

Life in Africa:

Q: My child lives with one or both parents, and is not an “orphan” – Why are they in the program?

A: Our Child Welfare staff works hard with families and local community and church members to be sure that we are always caring for children with the most need. Many guardians in our program sacrificially care for numerous children – frequently 4-6 children live under one roof. The consistency of family life is one of the most significant factors in a child's success. To support the family structure, we will often try to find sponsors for both birth and orphaned/fostered children. Due to AIDS/HIV, poverty and other harsh conditions, many families are in need of extra assistance, even if both parents are still living. For example, one parent might become severely ill, which could have major ramifications on the economic status of that family. When folks live this deep in poverty, they really just need someone to reach out and help them.

Q: My child seems much older than a child in that grade should be. How come?

A: In Uganda & Kenya, there are many reasons why a child may not be able to start school at a young age, or there may be extended periods where school is missed due to illness, caring for ill relatives, or working to support the family. Often there are gaps in education, and it is normal for a student to be in their 20's and still in secondary school. In the communities we serve, employment opportunities are very few and it is often impossible for a student to attend school and work to pay for their school fees. Unlike in America, part-time work-study jobs are not available as a means for students to help pay for their education. Frequently, elder children are also responsible for helping provide for younger siblings.

Q: My child's birth date is not listed on his/her profile. Why?

A: In Uganda & Kenya, birthdates are often not recorded, and culturally birthdays aren't regularly celebrated. If AOET-USA does not provide you with a birth date for your sponsored child, then we don't have one on record. If you would still like to observe a special day for your child, why not celebrate the date your sponsorship began? Your child will love it!

Q: What happens when a child completes their schooling?

A: Upon completion of secondary school, sometimes the child will have the opportunity to move onto vocational training or university. It is our hope that you are able to continue your sponsorship through high school. As a sponsor, we understand that your circumstances may change, and you are under no obligation to continue your sponsorship.

We are currently developing a separate program to address the needs of these students moving onto higher education. Upon completion of secondary school, we will notify you, send you program details, and see if you're interested in seeing your sponsored child through their higher education. We understand that this isn't going to be a possibility for all of our sponsors, and that's okay.

Q: What if life circumstances change for my child?

A: There are circumstances that could occur in which your child could move into another area or leave AOET's sponsorship program. For example, a relative may surface that could pay for their school fees, or the economic status of the family might change for the better, and they are no longer in need of a sponsor. There can also be unfortunate circumstances -- such as pregnancy, marriage at a young age, or disinterest in getting an education -- that could cause a student to leave our program. In the event that any of these situations happen, we will notify you as soon as possible, and offer to assign you another child in need of sponsorship.

Child Sponsorship Program:

Q: In what countries do you offer sponsorship?

A: AOET is currently providing sponsorships to children living in Uganda and Kenya.

Q: How long does my sponsorship last?

A: AOET commits to support a child through primary and secondary school. In some circumstances, the child may have the opportunity to continue to move onto vocational training or university, and we will be in touch with the sponsors if/when the time comes.

Q: May I sponsor more than one child?

A: Absolutely! After having a positive experience with us, there have been many sponsors who expand their support by adding additional children, donating to our transition fund (which helps cover children's sponsorships if they are in between sponsors), or donating to our general fund to help support & expand the programs that AOET offers.

Q: May I share a sponsorship with friends and family?

A: Yes, but we do ask for tracking purposes that one member of the group serve as the designated contact. We will send all communications from your child to that person, and they will be responsible for sharing such communications with the whole group.

Q: What are other ways I can support AOET?

A: We welcome your support! Below are some ways you can continue to support AOET:

- Join our prayer ministry. Get monthly updates on AOET activity and prayer requests. Simply sign-up online at: www.aoetusa.com/prayer-sign-up
- Support the general ministry of AOET~USA. Programs like Child Sponsorship, Chosen Tours, Service Teams and developing more awareness for AOET require additional support. You can make a donation today at: <http://www.aoetusa.com/donate-today/>
- Volunteer with AOET~USA in lovely Portland, Oregon.
- Advocate on behalf of AOET in these areas:
 - Child Sponsorship – Help us connect with folks in your area about sponsorship
 - Chosen Tour – Help us organize a Chosen appearance in your area
 - Schools – Help us connect schools in your area with AOET
 - Churches – Help us raise awareness in your church
- Visit Africa and partner arm-in-arm with your sponsor child's community.

If you are interested in any of these areas, please contact our staff in the great Northwest at 503.954.3711 or childsponsorship@aoetusa.com.

Financial:

Q: Are my donations tax deductible?

A: Yes, AOET~USA is registered as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization (#20-4145965) and oversees the usage of all funds to ensure that they are used for charitable purposes. You will receive a receipt after your donation, as well as a year-end giving statement by the end of January each year.

Q: Will email receipts save AOET money?

A: Yes! It saves us a lot of postage if we can email receipts. Please contact childsponsorship@aoetusa.com if you are interested in switching from mailed receipts to email receipts. Please mark aoetusa.com as safe, and check your SPAM folder if you haven't received our email communications.

Q: What percentage of the sponsorship money goes directly to my sponsored child?

A: More than 90% of your money is sent to AOET~Africa. The school fees can vary drastically between primary and secondary school, but on average, the funds are allocated as follows:

50% School Fees	27.5% Child Welfare	7.5% Health Care
7.5% Empowerment	7.5% Administrative Costs	

The remaining 10% of your money is used to support AOET~USA programs like Child Sponsorship, Volunteer Teams & The Chosen Tour.

Q: Will AOET~USA send me a reminder when my child's support comes due?

A: We have several different payment plans – monthly, quarterly, biannually or annually. Monthly supporters can use their payment receipt as their reminder to pay the following month. For all other payment plans, we will send out a payment reminder two months in advance, and then again one month in advance. We greatly appreciate on-time payments, and will do our best to remind you ahead of time!

For EFT and Credit Card pledges, monthly, quarterly and bi-annual payment plans will be automatically deducted. Annual credit card payment plans will require your approval before we process them.

Q: May I send more money than just the sponsorship fee to my child?

A: We appreciate your sponsorship and nothing more financially is expected. However, you may contribute twice a year to our Birthday and Christmas funds. These funds will be given to the in-country office to best decide how to spend them, ensuring that all children in the AOET program receive equal service. For example, rather than asking sponsors to send individual Birthday/Christmas gifts to their sponsored child, AOET will host one large party where all sponsored children will participate and receive a small treat.

If you are interested in giving additional funds, Empowerment, Healthcare and University are areas that impact every child and would definitely benefit your sponsored child.

Q: What if I have a financial change and cannot keep up with Child Sponsorship?

A: We understand that people experience financial changes that can make sponsorship difficult, but on-time payments are vital to the success of our program. Our goal is to keep sponsors & children connected, so we will work with sponsors who contact our office (503.954.3711, M-F, 9am-5pm PST) to accommodate temporary reductions needed to keep the sponsorship status in good standing.

We will attempt to contact you 30-60-90 days past due via all contact avenues available to us. Our program is very small, and timely payment of pledges is essential to our cash flow, which in turn affects timely payment to the programs in Africa. In the best interest of the child, if we don't hear from you after 90 days, the child will be reassigned a new sponsor.

School Life in Africa:

Q: What is the school system like in Uganda?

A: In Uganda, the government boasts education for all children, but the reality is that Uganda's public schools are incredibly overcrowded – with 100-300 students per teacher – and offer a very poor education. That is why most of our students are attending a privately run institution where school fees are paid each of the three terms in a school year. The terms are January-April, May-August and September-December.

Primary School: Nursery – Primary 1-7
Secondary School: Senior 1-6

University: 3 years
Vocational Training: 1-3 years

Q: What is the school system like in Kenya?

A: In Kenya, the government boasts education for all children, but the reality is that government funding per student is not enough to provide an education for each child. This forces schools to charge parents and guardians school fees per term. That is why many of our students are attending a privately run institution where school fees are paid each of the three terms in a school year. The terms are January-April, May-August and September-December.

Primary School: Nursery – Class 1-8
High School: Form 1-4

University: 4 years
Vocational Training: 1-3 years

Q: What do the school uniforms consist of?

A: In addition to their matching school uniforms, most schools require short hair as a sanitary precaution. You may have wondered why most children have shaved heads – even the girls! Shorter hair is also more conducive to warmer weather conditions. Your sponsorship helps provide a school uniform to each child.