

Child Sponsor FAQs



The Basics

Why should I sponsor a child?

- Child sponsorship is the only area of our work in Ghana in which supporters are able to directly connect and communicate with children in our program. It is an incredible opportunity to get to know and learn about a child's life in Ghana firsthand.
- Sponsorship is a huge part of our mission to empower and sustain families in Ghana; it eases the financial burden as a child returns home to begin school until a family is able to provide for the child once again.

How much does sponsorship cost?

- Sponsorship for one child is \$45/month, tax-deductible.

What is covered by child sponsorship?

- Educational needs: school tuition and fees, transportation to/from school, uniforms, supplies and books, extra tutoring to help maintain class level as needed, and vocational training for apprenticeship as needed (mainly for older children)
- Routine monitoring by a Ghanaian Social Worker: transitional mentoring for both children and parent in addition to parent training on saving, budgeting, healthcare, and family provision

Matching

How are sponsors matched with a child?

- Available children are listed on our website, and a sponsor may choose a specific child to support based on those listings. If no child is currently available, you will be added to a wait list and contacted as soon as our next rescue group becomes available for sponsorship.

Am I my child's only sponsor?

- Yes! We want to directly connect each of the children in our program to a specific sponsor in order to foster a long-term relationship. These are real children with real lives, and we want to provide as much consistency and stability as possible for them. You may not be your child's first sponsor if a past sponsor had to discontinue sponsoring for financial/life circumstances, but we do not match multiple sponsors simultaneously.

Can I sponsor more than one child?

- Certainly! We have families, organizations, individuals, and churches who sponsor multiple children. Let us know if you're interested in sponsoring more than one child.

Commitment

How long is sponsor commitment?

- We are committed to seeing each child through High School or equivalent vocational training based on his/her unique needs and family support system. The completion time for each child is unique and situational, based on his/her age, background, learning abilities, and family situation. We ask that if for any reason you are unable to continue sponsoring your child, please let us know as soon as possible so that we may prevent gaps in covering his/her needs.

If I can no longer continue sponsorship, will my child stop receiving program benefits?

- No. We are committed to supporting each child in our program until his/her education/well-being is sustained – through family or self-support. If you discontinue sponsorship, we look for another sponsor to pick up support of the child, but the child's benefits will continue without interruption.

Correspondence



How does correspondence with my child work?

- We coordinate as much communication as possible between sponsor and child, facilitating photo and letter exchanges throughout the year. Typically, we are able to foster 4-6 exchanges during the course of a year's time. All sponsor communication is monitored by, and delivered through, each child's designated social worker; to protect privacy, we do not share specific location information of children in our program or that of our sponsors.

What kind of information will I receive about/from my sponsored child?

- Exchanges may include recent photographs of your child, school term progress reports from your child's social worker, drawings or handwritten notes from your child, and updates from our Ghana or US team. Every child is in a different stage of English speaking and writing based on his/her age, learning abilities, school level, and time in our program so likely you will receive a variety of correspondence over the course of the sponsorship period.

Do I have to write letters?

- No, this is not a requirement of the sponsorship program. However, we strongly encourage our sponsors to engage their sponsored child as much as possible. You may handwrite a note to your child, send a simple postcard or photo, or email a letter that will be printed and delivered to your child. We try to offer many ways and opportunities for you to connect at your convenience. Letters can be a few sentences or more lengthy; the important thing is for your child to hear from you.

Content



What should I write about?

- Share about your family members, friends, and pets. Share things that are important to you and things you enjoy doing – sports, crafts, travel, cooking, games, etc. Share about your city, climate, geography, and occupation. Share about holiday traditions or family celebrations.

- Ask your sponsored child questions – favorite colors, foods, sports, games, about siblings. Ask about the country/culture of Ghana, what the climate is like, which holidays the family celebrates, and about his/her village. Encourage your child's studies or vocation; ask about favorite teachers and school subjects, ask what job he/she would like as an adult.

- Remember that these children have few possessions, so it's best to not write extensively about material items. Please also be sensitive that each of these children have recently come from working on the lake and avoid questioning that specific experience.

Can I send mail directly to my child in Ghana?

- No. The mail system in Ghana is limited to large cities, and most of our children live in rural areas where there are no addresses. Because of this, as well as location protection, each child's social worker coordinates exchanges with the children during their routine mentoring visits.

Can I send gifts to my child?

- Because of the number of children in our program, we aren't able to coordinate sending gifts. This is a logistical issue due to baggage restrictions as well as a distribution/consistency issue as many sponsored children have siblings and are in community with other children in the program.

- We do allow for sponsors to send anything that will fit flat in a 6"x9" envelope and encourage sending stickers, paper airplanes, greeting cards, coloring pages, pencils, balloons, small notebooks, drawings, activity sheets, bookmarks, etc. Photos of your family, pets, and favorite activities are especially treasured. Please do not send money, jewelry, crayons, or food/candy of any kind, and be selective and mindful of modesty and extensive material possessions when choosing photos.

Can I share about my child on social media?

- Yes! We'd love for you to share about your sponsorship support with your family and friends, and you are welcome to point anyone to our website and social media outlets where we share select stories of the children. Parental consent has been acquired for each child to participate in our program, but we do ask that you not share your child's last name on social media in order to ensure their security and privacy.

We believe in *empowerment* & in helping each of our children attain an *education* & a *future*.

Contact us with any additional questions at info@mercyproject.net or via the contact form on our website.

