

Chapter 2.

Rules If You Have a Qualifying Child



If you have met all the rules in chapter 1, use this chapter to see if you have a qualifying child. This chapter discusses Rules 7 through 9. You must meet all three of those rules, in addition to the rules in chapters 1 and 4, to qualify for the earned income credit with a qualifying child.

Note. You must file Form 1040 or Form 1040A to claim the EIC with a qualifying child. (You cannot file Form 1040EZ.) You must also complete Schedule EIC and attach it to your return. If you meet all the rules in chapter 1 and this chapter, read chapter 4 to find out what to do next.

No qualifying child. If you do not meet *Rule 7*, you do not have a qualifying child. Read chapter 3 to find out if you can get the earned income credit without a qualifying child.

Rule 7. Qualifying Child

Rule 7 Your Child Must Meet the Relationship, Age, and Residency Tests

Your child is a qualifying child if your child meets three tests. The three tests are:

- 1) Relationship,
- 2) Age, and
- 3) Residency.

The three tests are illustrated in *Figure 2* on page 12. The paragraphs that follow contain more information about each test.

Relationship



Relationship Test

Your child must be either your son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, or eligible foster child. The following definitions clarify the relationship test.

Adopted child. Your adopted child includes a child placed with you for adoption by an authorized placement agency, even if the adoption is not final. An authorized placement agency includes any person authorized by state law to place children for legal adoption.

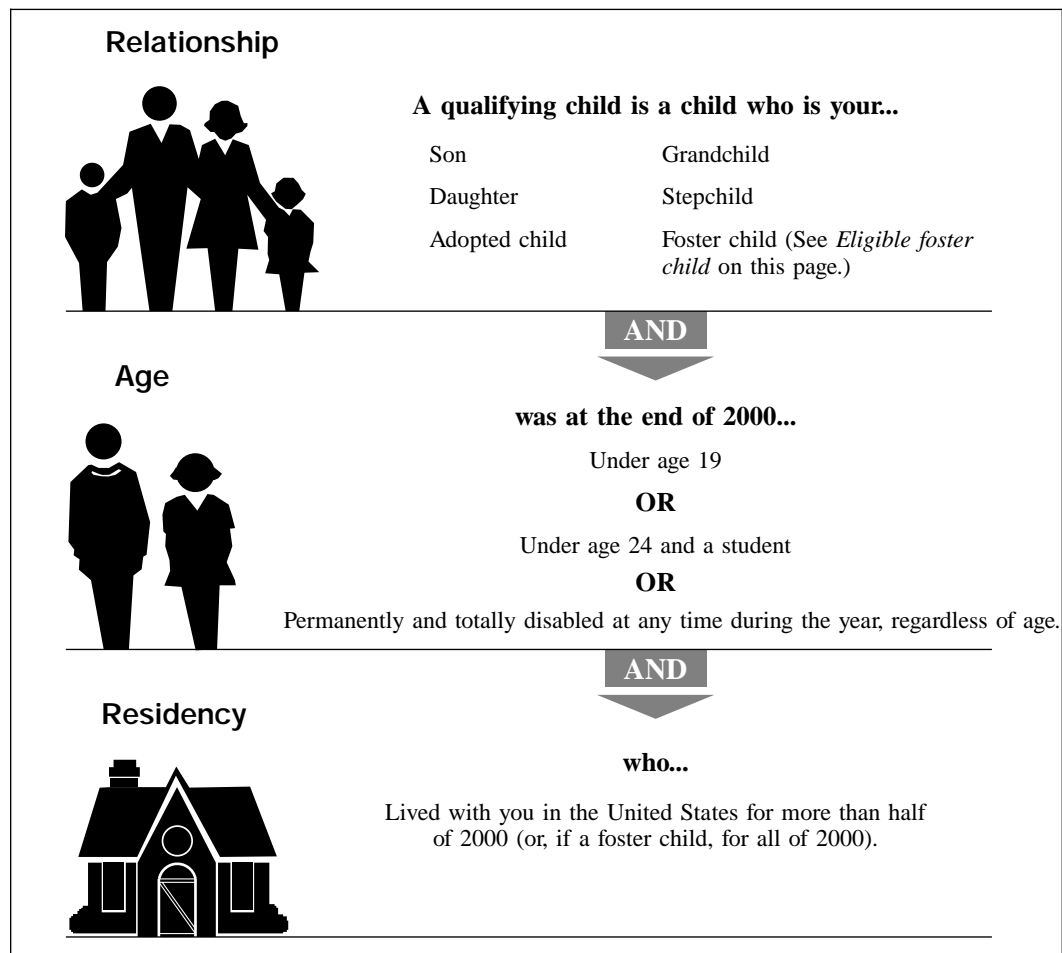
Grandchild. For the EIC, this means any descendant of your son, daughter, or adopted child. For example, a grandchild includes your great-grandchild, great-great-grandchild, etc.

Child not a dependent. Your child does not have to be your dependent to be a qualifying child, unless he or she is married.

Married child. If your child was married at the end of the year, he or she does not meet the relationship test unless either of these two situations applies to you:

- 1) You can claim the child's exemption, or
- 2) The reason you cannot claim the child's exemption is that you gave that right to your child's other parent:
 - a) When you completed Form 8332 or a similar written statement, or
 - b) In a pre-1985 agreement (such as a separation agreement or divorce decree).



Figure 2. Tests for Qualifying Child

Eligible foster child. For the EIC, a person is your eligible foster child if all the following are true.

- 1) You cared for that child as you would your own child.
- 2) The child lived with you for the **whole** year, except for temporary absences (explained on page 14). (A child who was born or died during the year is considered to have lived with you for the whole year if your home was the child's home for the entire time he or she was alive during the year.)
- 3) The child is your brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister; a descendant (including a child or adopted child) of your brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister; or a child placed with you by an authorized placement agency. An authorized placement agency includes any person authorized by state law to place children for legal adoption.

Example.
Eligible foster child

Example. You and your sister live together. You are 30. Your sister is 15. When your parents died 2 years ago, you took over the care of your sister, but you did not adopt her. She is considered your eligible foster child because she lived with you all year and because you cared for her as you would your own child.



Age Test

Your child must be:

- 1) Under age 19 at the end of 2000,
- 2) A full-time student under age 24 at the end of 2000, or
- 3) Permanently and totally disabled at any time during 2000, regardless of age.

The following example and definitions clarify the age test.

Example. Your son turned 19 on December 10. Unless he was disabled or a full-time student, he is not a qualifying child because, at the end of the year, he was not **under** age 19.

Full-time student. A full-time student is a student who is enrolled for the number of hours or courses the school considers to be full-time attendance.

Student defined. To qualify as a student, your child must be, during some part of each of any 5 calendar months during the calendar year:

- 1) A full-time student at a school that has a regular teaching staff, course of study, and regular student body, or
- 2) A student taking a full-time, on-farm training course given by a school described in (1), or a state, county, or local government.

The 5 calendar months need not be consecutive.

School defined. A school can be an elementary school, junior or senior high school, college, university, or technical, trade, or mechanical school. However, on-the-job training courses, correspondence schools, and night schools do not count as schools for the EIC. (But, see *Night school*, later.)

Vocational high school students. Students who work in co-op jobs in private industry as a part of a school's regular course of classroom and practical training are considered full-time students.

Night school. Your child is not a full-time student if he or she attends school only at night. However, full-time attendance at a school may include some attendance at night as part of a full-time course of study.

Permanently and totally disabled. Your child is permanently and totally disabled if **both** of the following apply.

- 1) He or she cannot engage in any substantial gainful activity because of a physical or mental condition.
- 2) A doctor determines the condition has lasted or can be expected to last continuously for at least a year or can lead to death.



Residency Test

Your child must have lived with you in the United States for more than half of 2000 (all of 2000 if an eligible foster child). The following definitions clarify the residency test.

Home. Your home can be any location where you regularly live within one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.

Homeless shelter. You do not need a traditional home. For example, if your child lived with you for more than half the year in one or more homeless shelters, your child meets the residency test.

Military personnel stationed outside the United States. U.S. military personnel stationed outside the United States on extended active duty are considered to live in the United States during that duty period for purposes of the EIC.

Extended active duty. Extended active duty means you are called or ordered to duty for an indefinite period or for a period of more than 90 days. Once you begin serving your extended active duty, you are still considered to have been on extended active duty even if you do not serve more than 90 days.

Birth or death of child. A child who was born or died in 2000 meets the residency test if your home was the child's home the entire time he or she was alive in 2000.

Temporary absences. Count time that you or your child is away from home on a temporary absence due to a special circumstance as time lived at home. Examples of a special circumstance include:

- Illness,
- School attendance,
- Detention in a juvenile facility,
- Business,
- Vacation, and
- Military service.



Social security number.

Your qualifying child must have a valid social security number (SSN), unless the child was born and died in 2000. You cannot claim the EIC if:

- 1) Your qualifying child's SSN is missing from your tax return or is incorrect,
- 2) Your qualifying child's SSN was issued only for use in applying for or receiving federally funded benefits,
- 3) Your qualifying child's social security card says "Not valid for employment," or
- 4) Instead of an SSN, your qualifying child has:
 - a) An individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN), which is issued to a noncitizen who cannot get an SSN, or
 - b) An adoption taxpayer identification number (ATIN), which is issued to adopting parents who cannot get an SSN for the child being adopted until the adoption is final.

If you have two qualifying children and only one has a valid SSN, you can claim the EIC only for that child. For more information about SSNs, see *Rule 1*.

Rule 8.
Qualifying Child of More Than One Person

Rule 8 Your Qualifying Child Cannot Be the Qualifying Child of Another Person With a Higher Modified AGI

Sometimes a child meets the rules to be a qualifying child of more than one person. However, only one person can claim the EIC using that child. The paragraphs that follow will help you decide who can claim the EIC when more than one person has the same qualifying child.

Which person can claim the EIC. If you and someone else have the same qualifying child, the person with the higher modified adjusted gross income (AGI) is the only one who may be able to claim the EIC using that child. The person with the lower modified AGI cannot use that child to claim the EIC. This is true even if the person with the higher