



# ISMK EDUCATION HANDBOOK

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YOUR EDUCATION  
QUESTIONS ANSWERED



## ISMK Education Handbook

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International Society of Missionary Kids

1445 North Boonville Avenue Springfield, MO 65802

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The ISMK Education Team wishes to express sincere appreciation to the many individuals who have contributed to this resource over the years. ISMK was founded in 1972, and since that time, numerous people have developed ideas, refined the MK program, and brought new focus to the teaching. We are grateful to each one of you. This program would not be what it is today without you!

*2023 Edition:*

W. Wright—MK Program Director

B. Skipper, M. Ed.—Executive Dean of MK Education-*compiled*

E. VanderMolen—AGWM Business Services-*edited*

## Dear Missionary Family:

When you answer God's call to be a missionary, making decisions about your children's education can be especially challenging. This manual is designed to help you learn about the schooling options and education resources available and then create a long-range plan for your family.

Take time to consider how your place of ministry may affect your children's education. Schooling options vary greatly by field, and depending on your length of service, you may need to use more than one.

It is also important to understand your children's learning process and long-range educational needs—from their current grade through high school graduation. Become a student of your children and their development. Every child is different, and parents are responsible to find out which type of schooling will allow each child to thrive.

The ISMK Education Team is here to help as you research and plan your child's education. We have access to education specialists and resources and want your transition overseas to be smooth and positive. Please feel free to contact our office with questions.

## Services

- Conferencing, dialogue, and support through email, phone, and social media
- Testing and support during summer programs—certified to provide grade-level assessments and some testing for learning disabilities; also available for dialogue
- Connecting with regional education consultants
- Connecting with education specialists who can provide phone/on-site support for children with special needs
- Assisting with developing a 504 or Individualized Education Program (IEP) if needed
- Offering resources from other organizations for information and support
- Offering homeschooling helps (for example, communicating with stateside companies on your behalf)
- Providing schooling options and resources

Serving your MKs,  
The ISMK Education Team

[TCKIEducation@gmail.com](mailto:TCKIEducation@gmail.com)

417-862-2781, Ext. 2395

[ismk.org](http://ismk.org) • [tcki.org](http://tcki.org) • Facebook: TCKI Parents

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## GETTING STARTED

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What schooling options will be available during our term of service?
- How will we prepare for our child's schooling overseas, including budget, curriculum, materials, records, and testing?
- What is our plan A?
- If plan A doesn't work out, what is plan B?
- Do I think my child will come back to the United States for college?
- What would returning to the United States involve academically for my child?
- Will we implement an English-based educational system, a national educational system, or a combination of the two?
- If our child attends a national school, what is its achievement philosophy (child-centered or system-centered)?
- If child has attended a national school and speaks another language, how would that affect/change his or her college preparation?
- If our child has special educational needs (an IEP or 504 plan), are the necessary services at a school in our country of assignment?
- If our child takes medication for education/behavioral purposes, can I obtain that medication in our country of assignment?

## SCHOOLING OPTIONS DEFINED

This manual provides detailed information about the schooling options that may be available to your family, but here's a quick overview:

1. **National schools** are local schools in your nation of assignment (similar to U.S. public or private schools). Most teach in the national language. This type of education can provide deep linguistic and cultural understanding and would be a good option if your child is planning on pursuing further education overseas rather than returning to the United States for college/university.
2. **International schools** are secular or Christian private schools that primarily enroll children of expatriates (including missionary, military, and business families) along with some nationals. The curriculum is usually American or British. Many schools offer extracurricular activities.
3. **MK schools** are usually managed by one or more missions organizations. The curriculum is often American and taught from a Christian perspective. These schools can range in size and often provide a family feeling among students and faculty.
4. **Boarding schools** offer living accommodations to students whose families live far from the school. You may choose this option if you do not have access to a local school and feel your child would benefit from a classroom setting.
5. **Home/Internet/correspondence schools** involve one-on-one instruction from parent to child and may also include online instruction. Curriculum is usually purchased from the United States. Families may choose this option out of necessity, family values, special education requirements, or the flexibility it can allow.
6. **Postsecondary schools** include colleges, universities, and technical schools. This section of the manual also includes resources for selecting a career, taking a gap year after high school, and enrolling in the International Baccalaureate program, which offers high-quality international education programs to a worldwide community of schools. Through the IB program, students receive diplomas that allow them to enter universities in their country of birth or virtually any other university around the world.
7. **Language schools** may be required before ministering full-time in your country of service. Your regional office will most likely assign the school you will attend. It is standard for children to attend a school nearby. Your regional office will be able to give you information about your children's education during your language school training. This schooling for your children can assist with language acquisition and cultural adjustments.

### ADAPTED FROM “PARENTS TEACHING OVERSEAS” BY SHARON HAAG

(Formerly posted on Africa Inland Mission website)

#### Family Education Plan

We believe when God calls into ministry parents with dependent children, He calls the whole family. The model of healthy family relationships can communicate biblical principles even when language barriers prevent verbal communication. Children can enhance your ministry—and God wants to use your ministry situation to enhance the development and growth of your children.

#### Schooling Options

The schooling options you choose for your children play a major role in who they become, “educating” them in areas far beyond academics. Each option has unique strengths and benefits, and the choices you make require as much prayer and wisdom from the Lord as any other ministry-related decision.

At different times in a family’s ministry responsibilities and at different ages or transition periods, different schooling options may be more helpful in a child’s development. Remaining open to reevaluating options and never ruling out possibilities can result in more comprehensive preparation for life.

**Home teaching** includes many opportunities to impart family values and the flexibility to meet individual learning and family needs. **National schools** help children quickly learn the local language and build relationships in the community. **Small, multigrade missions schools** provide homey atmospheres for developing strong friendships and learning to be productive members of groups.

**Larger school settings** often provide instruction or mentorship in special ability areas as well as steps to cultural adjustment in the passport country. Attending a **secular school** can develop strength for standing firm and can be a training ground for becoming salt and light in the world. Any school setting helps children learn to relate to authority figures other than their parents—a key skill in the world of work.

Every schooling option provides richness in ways others cannot. No one schooling option is broad enough to encourage development of all the skills, abilities, and attitudes you will want your children to acquire to be ready to live independently when that time comes. This is especially true if your children spend most of their growing up years in an isolated setting overseas and you want them to be prepared to live successfully one day in your home country. Above all, look for comprehensiveness and balance over your children’s entire school career.

#### Planning Ahead

Many families facing schooling choices have been challenged and encouraged by developing a family education plan. This helps them focus on the long-term values and goals they have for

their children. It helps them to be aware of and take advantage of the different schooling options that will support them in fostering this broad range of skills, attitudes, and values.

Getting caught up in day-to-day “survival” and just getting through the current year can make it easy to lose sight of long-term goals, to miss out on addressing some of the most important areas in which children need to develop. The family education plan can help keep broad, long-term goals in view.

First, list goals you have for your children. Which skills, attitudes, and abilities do you want your children to develop, both to live richly in the overseas setting and to take with them when they graduate and move out on their own? These are some of the values/goals other parents have listed:

#### *Academic Goals*

- Make good academic progress, to the extent of their abilities.
- Develop independent study skills and lifelong learning skills.
- Develop competence and ethics in the use of technology.
- Be exposed to a variety of career options.
- Develop in areas of giftedness.

#### *Work-Related Goals*

- Be prepared for higher education institutions of choice.
- Be able to work under authorities who don’t share the same values.
- Be able to work in groups (i.e., develop leadership skills and teamwork).
- Develop good work habits.

#### *Life Goals*

- Develop independent living skills for their passport country.

- Be emotionally mature and stable; be resilient.
- Take advantage of unique host-country learning opportunities.

#### *Cross-Cultural Goals*

- Make national friends.
- Learn host-country language.
- Develop culture adaptation skills.
- Value host culture.
- Value passport culture.
- Have strong ties to people and places in passport country.

#### *Relational Goals*

- Develop strong family relationships (including extended family).
- Have good relationships with other members of the body of Christ.
- Use personal gifts of service/ministry to the body of Christ.
- Trust God in personal hardship; display perseverance.

Second, think about how different schooling options might be particularly strong or weak in encouraging growth toward the goals you’ve listed.

Third, use a chart like the one below to plot what you anticipate the circumstances of your lives might be during your children’s schooling years.



## EDUCATION PLANNING CHART

### Instructions

1. Write your children's names in the boxes on the left side of the chart.
2. Across the top, list the school years from now through the time your youngest will graduate from high school.
3. For location, jot down what you anticipate your ministry situation to be during each of those years (i.e., itineration, language school, field assignment).
4. In the row beside each child's name, note the grade or level he or she will be in each year.
5. Examine the columns under each year on the chart. What might your life look like that year with ministry, living, and schooling responsibilities? What schooling options do you think you can handle, and which might best meet the needs of each child and your goals for him or her that year? Keeping the answers to these questions in mind, write the options you think you might choose each year in the row beside each child's name.
6. Discuss the chart as a couple. Be open to reevaluating and adjusting as circumstances and needs change.

### Sample Chart

Year	2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026	
Location	Itineration		Language School		On Field		On Field	
Child	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School
John	11	Public	12	Homeschool				
Sue	10	Public	11	Homeschool	12	MK School		
Mary	9	Public	10	Homeschool	11	MK School	12	MK School

### Issues to Consider

The early years in ministry are the best time for your children to learn the national language and build relationships in the culture. Also, if they will be living away from you later, it helps them feel more involved in the ministry if they know the people you are ministering to and understand what their lives are like.

### *Relationships*

Research on hundreds of adult MKs from many missions showed that those who felt involved in their parents' ministries had better life satisfaction as adults. Further, the research showed that living at a boarding school was not a significant factor in relation to later life satisfaction. Of far more significance was the quality of children's relationships with their parents.

### *Identity*

The teen years are key in the process of identity development. Many parents find that when their children attend a national school or are isolated from home-country peers during the teen years, they do not identify as citizens of their passport country as adults. Building close relationships with a variety of Christian adults helps teens separate their identities from their parents and encourages them to claim Christian beliefs and values as their own as they see them modeled in other adults they admire.

### *Itineration*

Take careful note of when your itineration will fall in each child's schooling. List goals that need to be addressed during itineration. What goals cannot be addressed nearly as well in the overseas setting? Many children find the middle-school years the most difficult for adjustment in U.S. school settings. What can be done to improve those difficulties (e.g., help children build strong friendships in that setting; remind them of successful adjustments during earlier furloughs; select the school setting or option with special care; time the furlough differently for more vulnerable children)?

### *Transitions*

Pay special attention to the last year of high school and first year of college. Most MKs want to spend their last year where their friends are and graduate with them. They also seem to need easy access to strong parental support during the first year of college. It may not be possible for families to time itineration to meet these needs/desires for each of their children.

### **Preparing MKs for Transition**

- During earlier itinerations, build strong relationships with families whose values you share and who could "adopt" your children if you're not there.
- Allow your children to spend the summer before the final year living with a family in your home country where they can hold a job, open a bank account, live on a budget, and get a driver's license.
- Practice the independent living skills they will need for that transition.

Every situation is different, and every child is different. What one family chooses may not be the best for another family. Praise God we have His Spirit to guide us in the overwhelming task of raising children to honor Him! What a comfort to know He promises wisdom but doesn't expect perfection. He can take both good and bad decisions and use them to help you *grow* as a family, so you may also more effectively *serve* Him as a family.

## LONG-RANGE EDUCATION PLAN

Use the space below to list goals per child, making copies as needed for multiple children. This will help you complete an education planning chart for each child.

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### ACADEMIC GOALS

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- 
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### WORK/CAREER GOALS

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### LIFE GOALS

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### CROSS-CULTURAL GOALS

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- 

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### RELATIONAL GOALS

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- 
- 
-

## BLANK EDUCATION PLANNING CHART

Use the blank chart below to fill in each of your children's names and grades and what type of schooling you anticipate using for each school year.

Year								
Location								
Child	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School

Year								
Location								
Child	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School

Year								
Location								
Child	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School	Grade	School

## ISMK LONG-RANGE EDUCATION PLAN

This chart is used at Candidate Orientation, Missionary Training, and Missionary Renewal during meetings with ISMK education consultants. Your consultant will discuss this plan with you and help you fill in the information during your meeting.

Family Name: _____	Date: _____
Host Country: _____	Term Length: _____
Child's Name: _____	Age: _____ Grade: _____
Child's Name: _____	Age: _____ Grade: _____
Child's Name: _____	Age: _____ Grade: _____
Child's Name: _____	Age: _____ Grade: _____
Child's Name: _____	Age: _____ Grade: _____

Which type of schooling options will be employed?

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Homeschool with parent as teacher**  
Curriculum: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Homeschool co-op or "one-room schoolhouse" (with a teacher)**  
Curriculum: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **International school**  
School name: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **National school**  
School name: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Boarding school**  
School name: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Combination of \_\_\_\_\_**  
Description: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Home-based distance learning (internet, correspondence, other)**  
Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary to middle school transition plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Middle to high school transition plan: \_\_\_\_\_

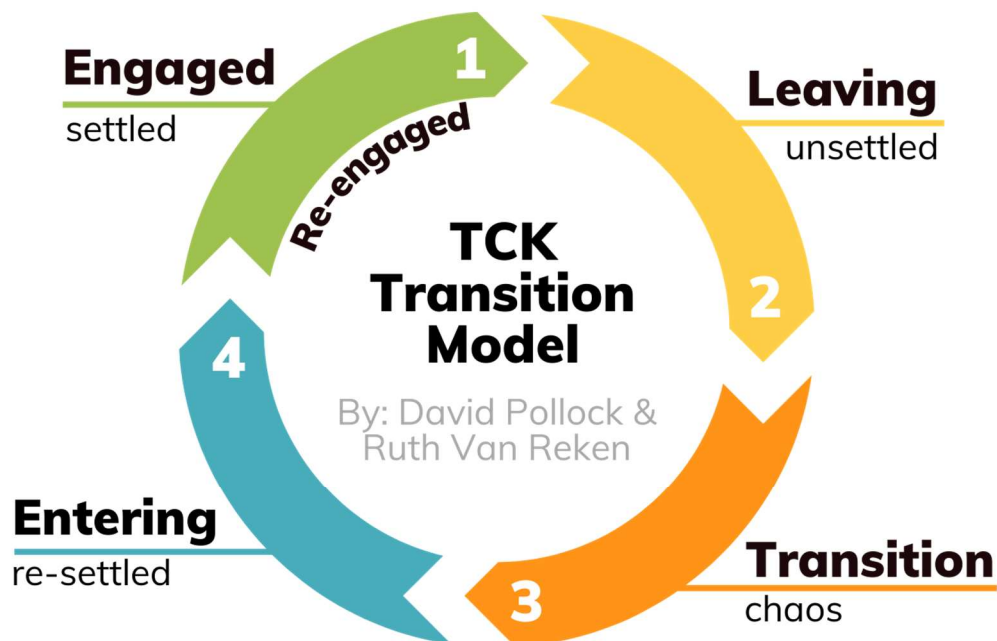
High school to college transition plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Postsecondary years (gap year, college, career): \_\_\_\_\_



### Topics to Discuss

- ☐ Your family's educational values and ministry involvement
- ☐ Bilingual or multilingual education
- ☐ Yearly basic skills assessment
- ☐ Education portfolio and history
- ☐ Personality and character
- ☐ Special needs (attention span [ADD/ADHD], delayed speech, language difficulties [dyslexia], gifted/talented, autism)



## BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

A portfolio is a collection of your children's schoolwork, test scores, and school calendars. It is important for you to create a portfolio for each child, even those who are not homeschooled. If school records are lost, if a school closes, if you are forced to evacuate a country, or if you are relocated, having the information listed below is critical.

Your children's portfolio will be used for multiple purposes, including assessment for grade placement in a U.S. school, college applications, and work applications to show experience. When you return to the United States and the public-school system assesses your children, a portfolio will give them a complete picture of your children's strengths and weaknesses.

### Why do I need an education portfolio for my children?

1. To stay current with U.S. education trends
  - a. Provides a complete, accurate assessment
  - b. Demonstrates your child's level of understanding of content
  - c. Shows multiple areas of strength/intelligence
2. To provide a true picture of your child's overall performance
  - a. Shows more than percentages and test scores
  - b. Shows child's unique personality beyond academics
3. To provide a growth comparison
  - a. Promotes evaluation tools: Where am I? Where have I been?
  - b. Builds self-worth and confidence and promotes personal growth
  - c. Highlights personal strengths
4. To record your child's work and preserve memories
  - a. Assists homeschooling parents with planning
  - b. Bridges the gap for national schooling families
  - c. Helps parents be stronger advocates for their child

### How can I use my children's portfolio?

1. During itineration
  - a. Assists in school placement
  - b. Helps school understand child's educational background
2. During reentry
  - a. Meets requirements for college admission
  - b. Helps college advisors and guidance personnel place your child
3. Applying for jobs
  - a. Demonstrates skills and experiences
  - b. Meets requirements of some professions

### How do I build my children's portfolio?

Gather general information (see below) about each school your children attend. Store this information in a safe place with other important documents like passports and birth certificates. We also recommend you save this general information electronically and give a backup copy to a family member in the United States.

- Name of school
- Address
- Phone and/or website contact
- Dates your children attended that school

If you choose to homeschool and do not have a report card or school transcript, this sample chart includes the type of information to track. Be sure to list all curriculum pieces used and the final grade in that level or if it was completed.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Name of Book</b>	<b>Grade/Level Completed</b>	<b>Final Grade</b>
Jane	Horizons			Alpha/Omega	Math 1	1st grade	A
John	Abeka			Abeka	English Lang. Arts	6th grade	B

You don't need to keep large quantities of each child's work. Keep a sampling every year that shows your children's growth and progress, classes, and activities:

- Official yearly transcripts and report cards (store with important family documents)
- 4–5 samples of math worksheets
- 4–5 writing samples from English and/or other language classes
- Photos or documentation of science fair projects
- Samples of projects or writing from history, government, or civics classes
- Examples of extracurricular activities (awards, photos, etc.)
- Samples of artwork or creative projects

Be sure to develop a plan for transporting portfolios when you travel to and from the United States or other countries.

See [Placement Testing](#) for more details about portfolio content.

## BUDGETS AND ITINERATION

### **Your Education Budget**

As you plan your missions budget, research education costs. Once you have chosen a type of schooling, your area director should be able to provide a rough cost estimate. We recommend adding funds to your budget beyond tuition costs to cover expenses like extracurricular activities, field trips, school fees, language study, and application fees. Your children should be able to obtain an education on the field that is comparable to what they would receive in the United States.

You can find most costs on the school's website or by emailing the school directly. Our minimum recommendation for your education budget is \$3000 per child per year. This amount may need to be higher, depending on the school, but we do not recommend budgeting a lower amount.

Homeschooling costs differ from traditional school costs. Communicate with your area director and/or regional director about what education supplies are covered in your budget (curriculum and shipping costs, customs/import duty charges, computer, DVD player, extracurricular activities, internet access, etc.). Make sure you budget enough for all costs for each child. Remember, even if you have homeschooled in the United States, your overseas homeschooling expenses will most likely be higher.

### **Education During Itineration**

Before returning to the United States for itineration or other long-term stay, it is important to plan for your child's education.

If you have been homeschooling your child while living overseas, you may choose to continue homeschooling during itineration. However, you may be responsible for homeschooling costs out-of-pocket while residing in the United States.

If your child has been attending a national school, it will be important to prepare them for the transition to a U.S. public school if you choose that option. Your child will need to be able to read, write, and speak fluent English to enroll in the U.S. public school system.

Consult your *Missionary Handbook* and regional office for the most up-to-date policies on education expenses while on itineration. Several months before your return to the United States, choose a type of schooling for your child and research the enrollment process.

## EDUCATION PLANNING SEMINARS

Some organizations provide education planning seminars to help you understand your children's learning styles and determine the best direction for their education. Costs for some seminars may be a (00) approved expense. Check with your regional office or regional accountant for details about what is approved.

**Interaction International**—[interactionintl.org](http://interactionintl.org)

Hosts two pre-field education planning seminars annually. Interaction International also helps parents make education decisions overseas by discussing available options, creating a workable education plan, selecting homeschooling curriculum, and guiding children through transitions.

**National Institute for Learning Development**—[nild.org](http://nild.org)

Provides conferences, testing, resources, and support for families of children with special education needs.

**Services in Asia for Family Education (SAFE)**—[safeasia.org](http://safeasia.org)

Provides services and support to Christian worker families in Asia, especially those using home, national, or online schools. Education resources include conferences, workshops, personal consultations, testing services, and resource centers.

**SHARE Education Services**—[shareeducation.org](http://shareeducation.org)

Helps English-speaking families living in Europe, Russia, Central Asia, and the Middle East with their children's education needs. The organization offers conferences throughout the year to provide ongoing resources, private consultations, and achievement or diagnostic testing.

## GENERAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

**Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)**—[acsi.org](http://acsi.org)

Provides leadership and oversight for [offices around the world](#) that support the national Christian school movement and maintain school membership within each country.

**Anchor Education**—[anchorededucation.org](http://anchorededucation.org)

Provides a comprehensive package of education consultancy services in Africa and the Middle East. Services include regional conferences, educational testing and evaluation, career/university preparation, and services for students with special needs.

**Graebel International**—[graebel.com/insights](http://graebel.com/insights)

Provides full services for member relocations around the world, including articles and helpful information about transitioning your family overseas.



**Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)—[hsllda.org](http://hsllda.org)**

Provides state education standards and homeschooling laws. The site offers state-specific contact information to answer your homeschool legal questions.

**Military Child Education Coalition—[militarychild.org](http://militarychild.org)**

Provides many articles and resources on a variety of education topics.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- **What is special education?** A form of learning provided to students with exceptional needs, such as learning disabilities, mental or emotional challenges, or physical disabilities.
- **What is a 504 plan?** A plan to provide services and changes to the learning environment in a school classroom to adequately meet the needs of the child. This plan is created by the parents, special education teacher, and school principal and is implemented by the teacher in the classroom.
- **What is an IEP (Individualized Educational Program)?** A plan for a child's special education experience at school that provides individualized special education and related services to meet the unique needs of the child. This plan is created by the parents, general education teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist or other specialist, and a school district representative. The plan is implemented with support from special education services and regular classroom teachers.

AGWM has missionary families all over the world whose children have special educational needs. You and your special-needs child can succeed on the field. Be sure to communicate your child's special educational needs to your regional office. With their support, the ISMK Education Team can provide resources and education specialists to help your family. We can recommend resources for diagnostic testing if your child is having difficulties and additional resources to help with continuing evaluation. Please feel free to call the ISMK Education Team if you have questions.

### Schools and Resources for Special-Needs Students

**Bridgeway Academy—[homeschoolacademy.com](http://homeschoolacademy.com)**

**IXL—[ixl.com](http://ixl.com)**

**Laurel Springs School—[laurelsprings.com](http://laurelsprings.com)**

**Learn Differently—[learndifferently.com](http://learndifferently.com)**

**National Center for Learning Disabilities—[ncld.org](http://ncld.org)**

**Support for Families of Children With Disabilities—[supportforfamilies.org](http://supportforfamilies.org)**

**U.S. Department of Education—[ed.gov/category/subject/disabilities](http://ed.gov/category/subject/disabilities)**

**WiloStar3D—[wilostar3d.com](http://wilostar3d.com)**

# NATIONAL SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is my purpose in choosing a national school?
- Is the school committed to individualized education and a child-centered philosophy?
- What is the education philosophy of that country (e.g., politics, holidays, discipline)?
- How will I parent my children through the national school process and make sure they learn appropriately?
- How are the discipline procedures different in the national school than in our home?
- How will I prepare my children for these differences?
- Is motivation in the school system shame-based or encouragement-based?
- Am I willing to stay involved to ensure a positive school experience for my children?
- How long do I plan for my children to attend the national school?
- Do I plan for my children to complete college in the national school system?
- If my children completes their education in a national school only, will they be limited to colleges and higher education *only* in that country?
- How will I prepare my children to transition to U.S. schools during itineration?
- How do the national school grade levels and U.S. school system grade levels differ?
- What type of curriculum is taught, and how is it used? How does this compare to U.S. curriculum?

## BENEFITS OF ATTENDING A NATIONAL SCHOOL

### **ADAPTED FROM “10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD STUDY ABROAD IN HIGH SCHOOL” BY ELEN TURNER**

(Original article: [www.gooverseas.com/blog/10-reasons-study-abroad-while-youre-still-in-high-school/](http://www.gooverseas.com/blog/10-reasons-study-abroad-while-youre-still-in-high-school/))

You may be asking yourself, how would attending a national school benefit my child? As you consider this option, think about his or her needs, personality, and future goals. Research the national school system in your country, and consider the following benefits for your child:

#### **Become more than just a tourist.**

Going to classes, learning a new language or dialect of English, and fitting in with everyday life in a foreign place is far different from being a tourist. And it's just as exciting, if not more so, because your child will learn about a place much more deeply this way.

#### **Narrow down a college major.**

There are so many exciting college majors, it can be hard to narrow down the options. One way is to study abroad and discover new interests. Perhaps your child excels at Spanish, is fascinated by different styles of architecture, loves how math and science break through language barriers, or discovers new environmental conservation practices abroad. His or her future major—and career path—may reveal itself in unexpected ways while studying abroad.

#### **Learn a new language.**

Knowing a second language is a great skill and can be useful in so many ways. It's best to learn languages when one is young, and immersion through studying abroad is a great way to improve language skills—or to pick up new ones.

#### **Experience a different culture and new ways of life.**

Travel broadens the mind and studying abroad exposes your child to more than just surface differences, including how young people in other countries live and study. Your child will realize that, while life throughout the world certainly is different, there are also many similarities that unite people.

#### **Add impressive resume experience.**

Your child will increasingly be asked about his or her resume during the college and career years. Rather than be impressed by schools or grades, many colleges and would-be employers are impressed by experiences that set your child apart and show initiative.

Whether your child studies in Japan or Ireland, being able to demonstrate flexibility, open-mindedness, adventurousness, and creativity is a major plus. Studying abroad shows these desirable qualities.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL COMPARISON CHARTS

The charts below are designed to help you compare U.S. grade levels with those in several other countries. This is not a comprehensive list, but most countries pattern their grade levels after one of these systems. Please contact the ISMK Education Team with specific questions.

Age	USA	England/Wales	Scotland	France	Korea
4	Pre-K	Reception		Moyenne Section	
5	K	Year 1	Primary 1	Grande Section	Optional Kinder
6	1	Year 2 (KS1 Test)	Primary 2	Cours Préparatoires	Institute of Music/Art
7	2	Year 3	Primary 3	Cours Élémentaire 1	Must be able to read
8	3	Year 4	Primary 4	Cours Élémentaire 2	Primary 1
9	4	Year 5	Primary 5	Cours Moyen 1	Primary 2
10	5	Year 6 (KS2 Test)	Primary 6	Cours Moyen 2	Primary 3
11	6	Year 7 (KS2 Test)	Primary 7	6ème	Primary 4
12	7	Year 8	Secondary 1	5ème	Primary 5
13	8	Year 9 (KS3 Test)	Secondary 2	4ème	Primary 6
14	9	Year 10 (O Level Exam)	Secondary 3	3ème	Middle School 1
15	10	Year 11 (O Level Exam)	Secondary 4	2nde	Middle School 2
16	11	Year 12	Secondary 5	1ère	Middle School 3
17	12	Year 13 (A Level Exam)	Secondary 6	Terminale	High School 1
18	College	University	University	Université	High School 2
19					High School 3
20					University

Age	USA	Mexico	Spain	Russia
4	Pre-K	Primary/Preescolar	Educacion Infantil (ages 3–5)	K or Nursery
5	K	Primary 1/Basica	Primaria 1	Primary 1
6	1	Primary 2/Basica	Primaria 2	Primary 2
7	2	Primary 3/Basica	Primaria 3	Primary 3
8	3	Primary 4/Basica	Primaria 4	Primary 4
9	4	Primary 5/Basica	Primaria 5	Middle School 5
10	5	Primary 6/Basica	Primaria 6	Middle School 6
11	6	Secundaria 1/Middle	Secundaria Obligatoria	Middle School 7
12	7	Secundaria 2/Middle		Middle School 8
13	8	Secundaria 3/Middle		Middle School 9
14	9	Superior 1/Secondary	Secundaria Obligatoria (2nd Cycle)	High School 10
15	10	Superior 2/Secondary		High School 11
16	11	Superior 3/Secondary	Bachillerato 1 (College Prep)	University
17	12	Senior Tech/Bachelor	Bachillerato 2 (College Prep)	
18	College	Senior Tech/Bachelor	University	

## NATIONAL SCHOOL RESOURCES

Some of the resources below will help you find a national school in your country of assignment. Others provide general information and resources for attending national schools. Most of the resources are found in Europe or parts of Asia, because there are few national schools in other parts of the world that are comparable or compatible with a U.S.-based education system.

### **Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)**—[acsi.org](https://www.acsi.org)

The world's largest association of Protestant schools, representing nearly 24,000 schools in over 100 countries. ACSI lists some national schools in its database. Click the *Find a School* menu to begin. The search engine can pull up available schools by location. The national schools usually have names in a language other than English.

### **Comparative & International Education Society (CIES)**—[cies.us](https://www.cies.us)

A scholarly association dedicated to increasing the understanding of educational issues, trends, and policies through comparative, cross-cultural, and international perspectives. More than 3000 individual members—researchers, analysts, practitioners, and students—use different conceptual frameworks to explore topics related to education. These include a focus on schools, students, teachers, and administrators, and on issues spanning early childhood and basic education to secondary and higher education, as well as nonformal education and lifelong learning.

### **Eurydice Network**—[eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice)

Provides information on and analyses of European educational systems and policies. It consists of 43 national units based in all 38 countries participating in the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme and is coordinated and managed by the EU Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels.

### **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**—[en.unesco.org](https://en.unesco.org)

Seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture. UNESCO's programs contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015. You can search general education information about your country of assignment.



# INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is my purpose in choosing an international school?
- Is the school committed to individualized education and a child-centered philosophy?
- What is the school's global education philosophy (e.g., politics, holidays, discipline, combining cultures in the classroom)?
- How will I parent my children through the international school process and make sure they learn appropriately?
- How are the discipline procedures different in the international school than in our home?
- How will I prepare my children for these differences?
- Is motivation in the school system shame-based or encouragement-based?
- Am I willing to stay involved to ensure a positive school experience for my children?
- How long do I plan for my children to attend the international school?
- Do I plan for my children to complete college in the international school system?
- How will I prepare my children to transition to U.S. schools during itineration?
- How do the international school grade levels and U.S. school system grade levels differ?
- What type of curriculum is taught, and how is it used? How does this compare to U.S. curriculum?

## BENEFITS OF ATTENDING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

### **BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLING BY ACS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS**

(Adapted from <https://www.acs-schools.com/relocation-professionals/benefits-international-schooling>)

The key findings of a recent survey of ACS alumni show that students who receive an international education leave school very well-prepared for further study and work. In particular, the survey reveals that international school students develop a better range of “soft” skills such as time management, critical analysis, and independent thinking than their peers who have followed national qualification programs.

Almost all respondents felt that their international education had prepared them well for their career, and the top quality highlighted was an appreciation of different cultures - named by 76 percent of respondents. 57 percent said their education helped them develop an inquiring mind, 58 percent named communication skills and 60 percent named self-management skills.

*“Studying in an international setting, with students from around the world, provided me with the environment to develop communication skills with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. The company I work for has offices all around the world and I’m frequently asked to work across borders. Given my experiences in the past, I’m comfortable when dealing with multiple cultures.”*  
Sam Hariton, ACS Cobham, Class of 2001

## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL RESOURCES

### **The Council of International Schools**—[cois.org](http://cois.org)

A not-for-profit organization of a worldwide international education community comprising over 740 member schools and 610 colleges/universities with experience in K–12 education in more than 120 countries. The central purpose of CIS is to enable member organizations to achieve and deliver the highest standards in international education and continually improve the outcome of student learning. The home page has a search engine for associated schools.

### **Directory of International/English Schools Worldwide**—[english-schools.org](http://english-schools.org)

Online directory of international schools, English schools, and American schools in Europe and throughout the world that offer an education in English or a language foreign to the native country. Content is supplied from the schools themselves either directly or from their websites. The list of schools is a side menu on each page.

### **The Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS)**—[ecis.org](http://ecis.org)

A global service membership organization that provides professional development opportunities to member schools. ECIS is committed to the promotion of an international outlook among its members.

### **International School Services (ISS)**—[iss.edu](http://iss.edu)

An organization that plans, designs, and manages schools around the world. In addition, they provide support activities to existing independent overseas schools. They currently work with over 500 schools.

### **Network of International Christian Schools**—[nics.org/schools](http://nics.org/schools)

This global network is comprised of 15 schools on five continents.

### **Quality Schools International (QSI)**—[qsi.org](http://qsi.org)

A nonprofit group of international schools in Europe, Asia, Eurasia, Africa, and Central and South America. They have schools in 31 countries and serve diplomatic, development, and business families. QSI schools are established to provide quality education in the English language.

### **U.S. Department of State**—[state.gov/schools-worldwide](http://state.gov/schools-worldwide)

A detailed list of all recognized international schools.

### AFRICA

#### KENYA

**Rift Valley Academy (K–12)**—[www.rva.org](http://www.rva.org)

A Christian boarding school located in central Kenya. The academy, a branch of Africa Inland Mission International, exists to provide a quality education in a nurturing environment for the children of missionaries serving in Africa. The school is divided into elementary and high school. Utilizing an American curriculum and accredited by the Middle States Association, RVA is designed to prepare the children of missionaries for higher education.

**Rosslyn Academy (K–12)**—[www.rosslynacademy.com](http://www.rosslynacademy.com)

A North American and Christian-oriented educational program for children of missionaries. In 1976 and 1988 respectively, the Baptist Mission of Kenya and the Assemblies of God became co-owners and sponsoring agencies. Rosslyn was first accredited in 1992 by Middle States Association (MSA) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

#### SENEGAL

**Dakar Academy (PreK–12)**—[www.dakar-academy.org](http://www.dakar-academy.org)

Fully accredited college preparatory co-ed day and boarding school serving grades Pre-K through 12. Provides quality education from a Christian perspective utilizing a U.S.-based curriculum. The [on-campus living program](#) accepts students in grade 6 and up. Instruction is in English with daily French classes for all levels.

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### ASIA PACIFIC

#### MALAYSIA

**Dalat International School (Pre-K–12)**—[dalat.org/web](http://dalat.org/web)

Provides an education for life founded on a biblical worldview. The school's academic and boarding programs provide quality care for children and are well-known around the world. Dalat is a non-for-profit school community located on the shores of Penang, Malaysia.

#### PHILIPPINES

**Faith Academy (Pre-K–12)**—[faith.edu.ph](http://faith.edu.ph)

An international Christian school offering Pre-K–12 education for the children of Christian workers as well as other national and international students.

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## EURASIA

### TURKEY

#### **Oasis International School (1–12)**—[oisankara.org](http://oisankara.org)

A small-school environment with school spirit and family involvement. OIS utilizes an American-based curriculum refined to reflect its Turkish environment. Core subjects include English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Other subjects include art, music, computers, library, Turkish language, religious instruction, and physical education.

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## EUROPE

### GERMANY

#### **Black Forest Academy (1–4 bilingual; 5–12 English)**—[bfacademy.com](http://bfacademy.com)

An international Christian school serving the children of Christian workers and business families who want a North American curriculum that incorporates a Christian worldview. BFA also features a residential boarding program for Grades 9–12.

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## LATIN AMERICA CARIBBEAN

### BRAZIL

#### **Pan American Christian Academy (Pre-K–12)**—[paca.com.br](http://paca.com.br)

A Christian, American, and Brazilian curriculum school located in São Paulo, working with nearly 350 students from different parts of the world. The school includes an American-style preschool, and the high-school program offers a dual diploma for American and Brazilian universities.

### ECUADOR

#### **Alliance Academy International (K–12)**—[alliance.k12.ec](http://alliance.k12.ec)

A private co-ed school located in Quito providing an extensive U.S. curriculum for the children of evangelical missionaries. Alliance Academy International holds is accredited with ACSI, AdvancED/Cognia, and the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education.

### HAITI

#### **Quisqueya Christian School (Pre-K–12)**—[quisqueyahaiti.com](http://quisqueyahaiti.com)

Open to English-speaking students interested in securing an excellent biblically based education which encompasses spiritual, social, and academic development.

### NICARAGUA

#### **Nicaragua Christian Academy (Pre-K–12)**—[nca.edu.ni/international](http://nca.edu.ni/international)

An evangelical, interdenominational, accredited international school offering a dual diploma program (American and Nicaraguan) if criteria are met.

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## **NORTHERN ASIA**

### **International Academy of Beijing (K–12)—[isb.bj.edu.cn/](http://isb.bj.edu.cn/)**

A Christian school in the heart of Beijing, serving the expatriate community. Many students' parents are involved in faith-based nonprofit work in China but others are diplomats, businesspeople, and educators. IAB is licensed by the Chinese government to enroll only students whose parents hold foreign passports and is accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

### **Xi'An International School (K–12)—[xianinternationalschool.com](http://xianinternationalschool.com)**

An international school that offers a complete American curriculum for Grades 5–12. Each grade level is taught by qualified, university trained native English speakers from North America, many of whom have master's degrees.

# MK SCHOOLS

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is my purpose in choosing an MK school?
- Is the school committed to individualized education and a child-centered philosophy?
- How will I parent my children through the MK school process and make sure they learn appropriately?
- Am I willing to stay involved to ensure a positive school experience for my children?
- How long do I plan for my children to attend an MK school?
- How will I prepare my children to transition to U.S. schools during itineration?
- Is my children's MK school education adequate preparation for attending a U.S. college/university?
- Is the MK school accredited? with what organization?
- What type of curriculum is taught, and how is it used? How does this compare to U.S. curriculum?

**Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)**—[acsi.org](http://acsi.org)

The world's largest association of Protestant schools, representing nearly 24,000 schools in over 100 countries. ACSI lists some national schools in its database. Click *Find a School* to begin. The search engine can pull up available schools by location. The national schools usually have names in a language other than English.

**Network of International Christian Schools (NICS)**—[nics.org/schools](http://nics.org/schools)

Aims to establish a worldwide network of international Christian schools staffed by qualified Christian educators, instilling in each student a biblical worldview in an environment of academic excellence and respect for people of all cultures and religions. NICS has 15 schools in 13 countries on five continents.

**International Schools Services (ISS)**—[iss.edu](http://iss.edu)

A nonprofit corporation dedicated to excellence for children attending overseas schools worldwide. ISS currently provides services to over 500 international schools (including several MK schools), such as teacher and administrator recruitment, supply procurement, financial management, publications, and consulting.



### AFRICA

#### KENYA

##### **Rift Valley Academy (K–12)**—[rva.org](http://rva.org)

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#### SENEGAL

##### **Dakar Academy (PreK–12)**—[dakar-academy.org](http://dakar-academy.org)

Fully accredited college preparatory co-ed day and boarding school serving grades Pre-K through 12. Provides quality education from a Christian perspective utilizing a U.S.-based curriculum. The on-campus living program accepts students in Grade 6 and up. Instruction is in English with daily French classes for all levels.

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### ASIA PACIFIC

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##### **Dalat International School (Pre-K–12)**—[dalat.org](http://dalat.org)

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## EUROPE

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#### **Black Forest Academy (1–4 bilingual, 5–12 English)**—[bfacademy.com](http://bfacademy.com)

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### **Xi'an International School (K–12)—[xianinternationalschool.com](http://xianinternationalschool.com)**

An international school that offers a complete American curriculum for Grades 5–12. Each grade level is taught by a qualified, university trained, native English speaker from North America, many of whom have master's degrees.

## BOARDING SCHOOLS

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is my purpose in choosing a boarding school?
- Is the school committed to individualized education and a child-centered philosophy?
- What is the school's global education philosophy (i.e., politics, holidays, discipline, combining of cultures in the classroom, teacher interaction, etc.)?
- How will I parent my children through the boarding school process and make sure they learn appropriately?
- How are the discipline procedures different in the boarding school than in our home?
- How will I prepare my children for these differences?
- Am I willing to stay involved to ensure a positive school experience for my children?
- How long do I plan for my children to attend the boarding school?
- How will I prepare my children to transition to U.S. schools during itineration?
- How do the boarding school grade levels and U.S. school system grade levels differ?
- What type of curriculum is taught, and how is it used? How does this compare to U.S. curriculum?
- How is the school calendar (breaks, holidays, etc.) developed? What is a sample of a daily schedule (classroom time, home time, mealtime, study time, etc.)?
- Will my children thrive in a setting away from home and family?
- What are the social/emotional benefits and concerns for my children attending a boarding school?

## THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING A BOARDING SCHOOL

By Allison Miller

*(Posted on former Boarding School Wizard website)*

Whether you're exploring boarding schools out of an interest in a different type of educational environment or because it's a family tradition to attend school away from home, there are many benefits to boarding school life.

### **Academic Challenge**

Boarding schools provide much more than an academically rigorous curriculum, although high academic standards and challenging courses are frequently the hallmark of a boarding school education. To be admitted, students need to demonstrate they can meet the high standards the schools set. But once in, they are often privy to an impressive selection of course offerings.

### **Round-the-Clock Learning**

Unlike in traditional public or private schools where teaching ends at 3:00, the learning in boarding schools continues long after the afternoon bell rings. The school day does not start and stop as it does in other scholastic settings. Whether during afternoon study sessions, in discussions over dinner, or as part of practice for the school play, students are constantly exposed to new information about the people and world around them.

### **Small Class Size**

The personal attention that is possible in a class with fewer students is another major benefit of a boarding school education. Teachers get to know their students extremely well, making it possible to provide one-on-one support and encouragement when needed. Likewise, students form close personal bonds.

### **Rich Extracurricular Activities**

While parents may worry about the supervision their child receives outside of the classroom, the truth is that boarding schools offer a wide range of activities to engage students during free time. From sports to art, music, special interest clubs, and volunteer opportunities, students are kept busy from morning to night.

### **Family Atmosphere**

When students and teachers live and study together 24/7, close personal relationships are formed unlike any other at a traditional day school. Roommates and classmates typically become lifelong friends.

### **Supported Independence**

Although students who attend boarding school are generally more independent, they are rarely unsupervised. Learning to make smart decisions in a safe environment is another major benefit of the boarding school experience.

### Relationships with Colleges

Some boarding schools have well-established relationships with college admissions offices, which may provide an advantage to boarding school students who choose to apply. This is more likely to be the case at college preparatory boarding schools. Boarding schools provide a wealth of opportunities for academic learning and personal growth. Students who enter excited about the chance to be part of the close-knit community are most likely to succeed.

## BOARDING SCHOOL RESOURCES

### **Boarding School Directory**—[boardingschools.us](http://boardingschools.us)

Parents can search for U.S. boarding schools by state, gender, or type.

### **The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS)**—[tabs.org/resources](http://tabs.org/resources)

Provides original and collaborative research along with timely news and resources related to TABS and boarding school education, practice, and policy.

## BOARDING SCHOOLS

### AFRICA—KENYA

#### **Rift Valley Academy (K–12)**—[rva.org](http://rva.org)

A Christian boarding school located in central Kenya. The academy, a branch of Africa Inland Mission International, exists to provide a quality education in a nurturing environment for the children of missionaries serving in Africa. The school is divided into elementary and high school. Utilizing an American curriculum and accredited by the Middle States Association, RVA is designed to prepare the children of missionaries for higher education.

### AFRICA—SENEGAL

#### **Dakar Academy (Pre-K–12)**—[dakar-academy.org](http://dakar-academy.org)

Fully accredited college preparatory co-ed day and boarding school serving grades Pre-K through 12. Provides quality education from a Christian perspective utilizing a U.S.-based curriculum. The on-campus living program accepts students in Grade 6 and up. Instruction is in English with daily French classes for all levels.

### ASIA PACIFIC—PHILIPPINES

#### **Faith Academy (K–12)**—[faith.edu.ph/about](http://faith.edu.ph/about)

An international Christian school offering Pre-K-12 education for the children of Christian workers as well as other national and international students. The school has two campuses, one located just east of Metro Manila and the second campus is situated in the southern Philippine city of Davao. Faith Academy is accredited through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Faith Academy boarding supports missionary families serving throughout Asia by providing quality care and nurturing in the school's boarding homes. Faith Academy sees these homes as one possible alternative in meeting the educational needs of missionary families.

#### **EUROPE—GERMANY**

##### **Black Forest Academy (1–4 bilingual, 5–12 English)—[bfacademy.com](http://bfacademy.com)**

An international Christian school serving the children of Christian workers and business families who want a North American curriculum that incorporates a Christian worldview. BFA also features a residential boarding program for Grades 9–12.

#### **LATIN AMERICA CARIBBEAN—ECUADOR**

##### **Alliance Academy International (K–12)—[alliance.k12.ec](http://alliance.k12.ec)**

A private co-ed school located in Quito providing an extensive U.S. curriculum for the children of evangelical missionaries. Alliance Academy International holds full accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Christian Schools International. International offers a residential program on the school's campus for secondary school students.

## HOME AND INTERNET SCHOOLS

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What curriculum will you use?
- Is the curriculum accredited? How will this affect your children's long-term education goals?
- What kinds of records will you need to maintain?
- How will you structure and schedule your children's study?
- How will you network for social and emotional development?
- How will you help your children adapt cross-culturally?
- Will your children thrive in a daily environment where interaction with peers is limited?
- How will you stay updated regarding the laws and standards of your state?
- What type of assessment or testing will you use?



By Ann Zeise and Carol Moxley

*(Formerly posted on A2ZHomeschooling site)*

*Note: While this is written from a secular perspective and focuses on homeschooling in the United States, it offers good information.*

### **What is homeschooling?**

Homeschooling is a viable alternative to institutional schooling. In compliance with state laws, children learn under the supervision of their parents. Parents assume control of the content of their children's learning. It is a complete substitute for institutional schooling.

There are other forms of alternative education that, though they may be called "homeschooling," fall directly under the supervision of school personnel. Examples are independent study programs (ISPs) or some kinds of "visiting teacher" programs for homebound children. While these plans may be called "homeschooling" or "home education" and involve the student learning at home, neither the students nor the parents have much control over the content.

### **Who homeschools?**

People from all walks of life homeschool. Homeschoolers live in large cities, small towns, on farms and ranches, in mountains and deserts. They live in families where mom stays home and dad works or vice versa. They are blended families, two-parent families, or single-parent families. Sometimes both parents work and a grandparent takes an active role in the education process. The variations are endless.

### **Why do families homeschool?**

Families choose to homeschool for various reasons, and the benefits usually keep them going. Here are just a few:

- Continuing the close parent-child relationship that has developed since birth
- Better supervision over the content of their children's education
- Better ability to meet the special needs or learning styles of their children
- Concerns about the safety of local schools or the long commute
- Flexible schedule

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## LEGAL OPTIONS

### Is homeschooling legal?

Homeschooling is legal in all 50 U.S. states. Specific laws vary from state to state. It is also legal or becoming more acceptable in all provinces in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Puerto Rico, Japan, South Africa, and other countries. In some countries, it is practiced illegally as homeschoolers work to change the laws.

### What is the law where I live?

Some places require you to inform the government of your intent to homeschool in order to avoid truancy. In some areas, you may declare your home a private school and be exempt from government interference. In other areas, you must be supervised by a cover school. You only need to concern yourself with the law if your child falls within the age range for compulsory education in your state. You may certainly live the homeschooling lifestyle if your child is younger or older; you can just ignore any registration or reporting requirements.

### Do I have to have a degree or special training?

Not usually, but credentialed teachers have it easier in some places and may tutor their own children without any supervision. Requirements vary from state to state. Most don't even require a parent to have a high school diploma. One state requires a "How to Homeschool" course.

### What's the best source of legal information?

Local homeschooling groups have experienced homeschoolers who will be the best sources of information on how to meet the legal requirements in your school district. Be sure you have an experienced, reliable source for information. Remember, these people are not lawyers! It is up to you to read the law for yourself.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL HOMESCHOOLING

There are several issues that you should be aware of when considering homeschool as an educational option for your children.

Experts say that among MKs, correspondence/homeschool works best if it is used as a temporary schooling solution, because children need more socialization opportunities than the correspondence or homeschool environment offers. Academically, MKs do fine in the correspondence/homeschool setting.

Studies indicate that children who have been in correspondence/homeschool for long periods of time have greater socialization problems than those in day schools or boarding schools. Social adjustments tend to be the most difficult adjustments MKs face already, especially when they return to the States for college and career.

## SOCIALIZATION FOR HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS

To counteract the socialization problems, parents should provide daily and weekly social settings for their children, such as:

- Host neighborhood children.
- Take children's peers with them on outings and field trips.
- Take children to other children's homes to visit and play.
- Get children involved at church .
- Join clubs.
- Get involved in local sports, extracurricular activities, and summer camps thorough schools, churches, or clubs.

## TESTING AND RESOURCES FOR HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS

Learning disabilities are more difficult to detect in homeschool. It is important to discover learning disabilities and get help while children are young, preferably in kindergarten and first grade. Parents should have their children periodically tested in an overseas MK school, an American international school, or if they are in the States, at a U.S. public school, university, or private learning institution. If a parent suspects developmental issues related to a child's speech/language, the child should be evaluated by a pediatrician.

While living overseas you are not held to U.S. state laws. However, when you return to the States, you will need to show your child's portfolio to prospective schools for placement purposes.

Homeschool laws in most states require assessment of basic skills. Check state laws. Yearly testing is recommended as well as keeping test results in their portfolios.

**Homeschooling State Laws**—[hslida.org/legal](https://hslida.org/legal)

**General Testing Information**—[homeschool.com/blog/2019/02/complete-guide-to-homeschool-testing](https://homeschool.com/blog/2019/02/complete-guide-to-homeschool-testing)

**Aptitude Testing**—

- [homeschool.com/articles/resource-guide-for-all-types-of-homeschool-testing](https://homeschool.com/articles/resource-guide-for-all-types-of-homeschool-testing)
- [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat)
- [act.org](https://act.org)

**Samples of State Standardized Tests**

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)—[setontesting.com/product/iowa-assessments-form-e/](https://setontesting.com/product/iowa-assessments-form-e/)
- California Achievement Test (CAT)—[setontesting.com/product/cat-survey](https://setontesting.com/product/cat-survey)
- Stanford Achievement Test (SAT)—[setontesting.com/product/stanford-10-online](https://setontesting.com/product/stanford-10-online) (usually administered by a certified educator, but because it's offered online, a certified test administrator is not required).

- Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT)—[tests.com/MAT-8-Testing](https://tests.com/MAT-8-Testing)
- Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)—[brewertesting.com//TerraNova.html](https://brewertesting.com//TerraNova.html)
- Comprehensive Testing Program (CTPIII)—[erblearn.org/educators/comprehensive-assessments](https://erblearn.org/educators/comprehensive-assessments)
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)—[pearsonassessments.com/store/usassessments/en/Store/Professional-Assessments/Academic-Learning/Brief/Wide-Range-Achievement-Test-%7C-Fifth-Edition/p/100001954.html](https://pearsonassessments.com/store/usassessments/en/Store/Professional-Assessments/Academic-Learning/Brief/Wide-Range-Achievement-Test-%7C-Fifth-Edition/p/100001954.html)
- Peabody Individual Test—[achievement-test.com/testing-options/peabody](https://achievement-test.com/testing-options/peabody)
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt—[hmhco.com/classroom-solutions/assessment](https://hmhco.com/classroom-solutions/assessment)
- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment Test (PSSA) [education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Pages/default.aspx](https://education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Pages/default.aspx)

## PLACEMENT TESTING

### AN EXCERPT FROM “PARENTS TEACHING OVERSEAS” BY SHARON HAAG

(Formerly posted on Africa Inland Mission website)

#### What tests should I give my children?

Consider first the purpose you want to accomplish. Testing can be helpful toward several goals:

- Evaluating student progress in a particular academic area and keeping assessment records (progress reports, samples of work)
- Determining strengths and weaknesses so that curriculum can be adapted to meet individual needs
- Understanding approximately how a child will fit in academically according to home country standards
- Obtaining a measure of achievement that is understood and respected by home-country educators

Various kinds of assessments can be used to accomplish these purposes. To evaluate academic progress and understand strengths and weaknesses so that you can plan appropriate curriculum, it is most helpful to use informal inventories/evaluations and the kinds of tests that are included with the curriculum materials you are using.

Informal reading inventories are a valuable tool. Listening to a child read aloud helps determine if the selection is an appropriate reading level for him or her.

- Misreading five words per page (three for younger children) indicates the material is too difficult
- Reading with fluency and appropriate expression is a good indicator that the student comprehends the material
- Noticing the kinds of errors made gives direction regarding what kinds of skills need work

The formal tests at the end of chapters and units in textbooks can be used before material is studied to develop a more appropriate study plan. Not spending time on what the child already knows allows for effective use of time.

Take care to understand all the learning goals of a unit before skipping sections. For example, many children who can read selections from their reading program with comprehension need to read the selection anyway if a learning goal is to focus on elements of literature or writing with which they are not familiar.

At the same time, it may be possible to skip comprehension exercises or sections of practice problems if the child clearly knows how to do them.

### **Achievement Tests**

If you plan to return to your home country and enroll your children in school, it is helpful to have them periodically take achievement tests typical in your home country. Some countries have a schedule for testing at particular ages, and you should follow that.

For countries that do not have assigned ages for testing, give a standardized achievement test the year before itineration. Doing it at the beginning of the school year gives opportunity to strengthen areas of weakness that may not have been covered in the curriculum you are using.

Another reason for giving standardized achievement tests is to help your children to learn the kinds of test-taking skills they will need in your home country. Also, national standardized achievement test scores are readily understood by educational personnel in home countries.

### **Portfolios**

Formalized testing may not always be necessary. Even in Canada and the United States, schools are increasingly looking with favor on portfolios (samples of student work). Even if formal test scores are desired, it is nevertheless helpful to maintain a portfolio, because it provides a teacher or school with more information than mere grades and test scores.

An important item to include in a portfolio is a writing sample. To provide useful information, the sample should show the process the student went through, not just the final product. First draft and revisions should be attached to the final copy to show the student's progression through the writing process. If possible, have a sample from the beginning, middle, and end of the school year so development of writing skills can be noted.

To show student comprehension of written material and the ability to respond in writing, include in the portfolio an essay test in any subject area. A research report or description and pictures of a student-planned and executed project gives good indication of ability to plan, research, organize, and present information in a clear and interesting manner.

These kinds of skills are increasingly being recognized as important. They provide information that cannot be ascertained if only objective, multiple-choice types of assessment are given and if grades or test scores are the only kinds of records available.

## HOME, CORRESPONDENCE, AND INTERNET EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

### **Associate of Christian Schools International**—[acsi.org](http://acsi.org)

Associate of Christian Schools International provides leadership and oversight for country/region schools around the world. These offices support the national Christian school movement in their areas and maintain school membership within each country.

### **Anchor**—[anchorededucation.org](http://anchorededucation.org)

Provides a comprehensive package of educational consultancy services within Africa and the Middle East. Services include Africa/Middle East regional conferences, educational testing and evaluation, career/university preparation, and services for students with special needs.

### **GoNoodle**—[gonoodle.com](http://gonoodle.com)

A fun site to help you maximize movement, instructional time, and fun! Provides videos to download, interactive games for content review, and informal assessment tools for student progress. Also provides a blog with helpful links and resources.

### **Homeschool.com**—[homeschool.com](http://homeschool.com)

Home education hub for information about curriculum, testing, and laws. Provides worldwide and regional support for homeschooling families. Also provides international homeschool legality issues.

### **Homeschool Legal Defense**—[hsllda.org](http://hsllda.org)

Includes a search by your state of residence to learn state education standards and homeschooling laws. Can pay to be a member or use free resource links. Each state offers contact information to answer homeschool legal questions.

### **HomeLife Academy**—[homelifeacademy.com](http://homelifeacademy.com)

Private school and ministry offering homeschool families academic counseling, support, official transcripts and diplomas, full-service records department, online reporting, and account access

### **Interaction International**—[interactionintl.org](http://interactionintl.org)

A catalyst and a resource working cooperatively in the development of programs, services, and publications to provide and contribute to an ongoing flow of care that meets the needs of third-culture kids and internationally mobile families.

### **North Atlantic Regional High School**—[narhs.com](http://narhs.com)

Strengthens home-based education by providing consultation and tools to support course planning, student work assessment, quality academic learning, and goal setting, leading to a high school transcript and diploma with far-reaching transferability and acceptance.

**Services in Asia for Family Education (SAFE)**—[safeasia.org](http://safeasia.org)

Provides services and support to Christian worker families in Asia, especially those using home, national, or online schools. Education resources include conferences, workshops, personal consultations, testing services, and resource centers.

**SHARE Education Services**—[shareeducation.org](http://shareeducation.org)

Helps English-speaking families living in Europe, Russia, Central Asia, and the Middle East with education needs. The organization offers conferences throughout the year to provide ongoing resources, private consultations, and achievement or diagnostic testing.

**Cathy Duffy's 102 Top Picks for Homeschooling**—[cathyduffyreviews.com/homeschool-extras/parent-helps-and-how-to-books/general-parent-helps/102-top-picks-for-homeschool-curriculum#](http://cathyduffyreviews.com/homeschool-extras/parent-helps-and-how-to-books/general-parent-helps/102-top-picks-for-homeschool-curriculum#)

Guide to help Christian homeschool families by providing tools to figure out which curricula will work best for individual families.

HOME, CORRESPONDENCE, AND INTERNET SCHOOLS

**Abeka Academy (Pre-K–12)**—[abeka.com](http://abeka.com)

Approach to Christian education that keeps learning lively, interesting, and memorable. Over 800 textbooks and teaching aids are available for nursery through Grade 12. Parents can order complete child and parent kits, subject kits, or individual items. Many homeschool curriculum/lesson plans are available to help with daily plan.

**Accelerated Christian Education Ministries (K–12)**—[aceministries.com/homeschool-options](http://aceministries.com/homeschool-options)

Offers two ways to homeschool—Lighthouse Christian Academy (LCA) or independent homeschool. LCA is the official K–12 distance-learning provider for Accelerated Christian Education Ministries (ACEM) and exclusively uses the A.C.E. curriculum. A.C.E. also offers support for independent homeschool families.

**Alpha Omega Academy (K–12)**—[aoacademy.com/index.php](http://aoacademy.com/index.php)

An accredited, full-service distance learning program for Christian homeschoolers K–12. The homeschool curriculum branch, **Horizons** ([aop.com/curriculum/horizons](http://aop.com/curriculum/horizons)) includes print-based, computer-based, and online formats.

**American School (9–12)**—[americanschoolofcorr.com](http://americanschoolofcorr.com)

Offers high school correspondence and online courses and online middle school courses. Curriculum includes a middle school program and a high school college preparatory program.

**BJU Press (K–12)**—[bjupresshomeschool.com](http://bjupresshomeschool.com)

BJU Press is a publisher of textbooks and video lessons for homeschool families. They are committed to creating materials that help parents deliver an education based on sound educational principles while inspiring learning and maintaining a solid biblical worldview.



**Bridgeway Academy**—[homeschoolacademy.com](http://homeschoolacademy.com)

Offers secular and Christian options for homeschoolers, charter schools, state organizations, and others who seek home education options for their families.

**Calvert Academy (9–12)**—[calverteducation.com/curriculum/calvert-academy-online-private-school](http://calverteducation.com/curriculum/calvert-academy-online-private-school)

Accredited, online private school for high school students. This diploma-granting program combines the flexibility of at-home learning with a rigorous academic curriculum.

**Calvert Homeschool (Pre-K–12)**—[calverteducation.com/homeschool](http://calverteducation.com/homeschool)

Time-tested curriculum options through Calvert Education. Also provides tools and support and free downloadable resources.

**K12 Online School (K–12)**—[k12courses.com/online-homeschool/](http://k12courses.com/online-homeschool/)

A leader in helping families achieve a world-class education for their students right at home. Whether you're looking to supplement your child's traditional brick-and-mortar education or to expand your own homeschooling program, K12 stands with your desire to bring excellence to your child's education.

**Laurel Springs School (K–12)**—[laurelsprings.com](http://laurelsprings.com)

Accredited independent study. Focuses on children with special education needs and provides custom classes as well as honors, UC, and NCAA approved courses. Course credits are transferable, and students may enroll in programs at any time of year. They provide a yearbook, prom, and graduation ceremony.

**My Father's World (Pre-K–12)**—[mfwbooks.com](http://mfwbooks.com)

Combining the best of Charlotte Mason, classical education, and unit studies with a biblical worldview.

**North Dakota Center for Distance Education (6–12)**—[ndcde.org/](http://ndcde.org/)

Variety of courses available for online independent study for students in grades 6–12. Accreditation and course requirements for graduation differ from state to state.

**NorthStar (6–12)**—[northstar-academy.org](http://northstar-academy.org)

NorthStar Homeschool and Independent Study (HIS) provide strong, researched, multimedia-rich, academically challenging, thorough, and detailed lessons and lesson resources which have all been created by veteran teachers.

**RightStart for Home School**—[rightstartmath.com/](http://rightstartmath.com/)

Hands-on program deemphasizes counting and uses visualization of quantities. The primary learning tool is the AL Abacus, a specially designed two-sided abacus that is both kinesthetic and visual.

**Sevenstar (6–12)**—[sevenstar.org](http://sevenstar.org)

A leader in online Christian education currently serving students worldwide with high-quality learning solutions. Online courses are rigorous and exceed all U.S. national standards and recommendations.

**Singapore Math (Pre-K–12, specific subjects)**—[singaporemath.com](https://singaporemath.com)

Provides curriculum for mathematics, science, English, Chinese, and art for Pre-K students.

**Sonlight (Pre-K–12)**—[sonlight.com](https://sonlight.com)

Christian company specializing in literature-based homeschool curriculum programs. Provide complete curriculum packages and individual resources/materials so you can build the preschool or K–12 homeschool curriculum that best meets your family's needs. Based in Littleton, Colorado, Sonlight serves customers in over 150 countries worldwide.

**TCK International Academy (K–12)**—[tckacademy.com](https://tckacademy.com)

Prepares third-culture kids academically, spiritually, and emotionally for postsecondary academics and careers. TCKIA is not a homeschool program but an accredited distance-education school with a biblical worldview providing an educational center that simultaneously connects students with other TCKs and certified faculty.

**The Potter's School (4–12)**—[at-tps.org](https://at-tps.org)

Provides complete academic support from Grades 4 through graduation, including college dual credit. The program includes live online core academic courses with high academic standards, a thoroughly integrated biblical worldview, and timely effective feedback.

**University of Nebraska High School (9–12)**—[highschool.nebraska.edu](https://highschool.nebraska.edu)

A college-prep high school offering quality education and academic services to students online.

## PREP FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PLANS

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What does my child want to do after high school?
- If college is the best fit for my child, what type of school should he/she attend (Christian, Assemblies of God, state, community, etc.)?
- Do I have an opportunity to visit or get information during itineration or vacation?
- Do I want my child to enroll in dual-credit, Advanced Placement, or IB courses to advance them for college?
- Has my child completed the high school requirements to apply for college?
- Has my child taken the PSAT, SAT, or ACT?
- Have I discussed with my child how we will pay for college?
- Have we explored and applied for loans, scholarships, grants, etc. (FAFSA, AG scholarships, MK scholarships, state discounts, etc.)?
- Have we discussed vocational or technical school options?
- Have we created a workforce plan?
- Have we discussed a gap year? How would it affect college costs, application timing, and career options?
- How will I prepare my child to transition to a U.S. college after living overseas?
- How will I prepare my child for living in the States, knowing this transition can affect his or her education (driver's license, acquiring a job, opening a bank account, etc.)?
- Is my child adequately prepared for the level of study required in college?

## COLLEGE PREPARATION

Once you are on the field, the MK office sends a resource packet at the beginning of each calendar year to high school juniors and seniors that provides detailed information about college prep, financial aid, choosing a college, and leaving your country well.

Below is a suggested college-prep timeline. If your child is close to 11th or 12th grade as you prepare to go overseas, try to do as many of these things in the United States before you leave for the field. No matter where you live, be sure your MK has enough credits and electives to apply to his or her college of choice. (See sample credit requirements.) The goal is to finish high school well, so your child is prepared for the transition to college or work.

## SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

### Missouri Graduation Requirements

Subject	Minimum Graduation Requirements	Recommended for College-Bound Students	Additional Requirements	Tips for Success
English	4 credits	4 credits		
Mathematics	3 credits	4 credits		Students who take a fourth year of math are often more successful in completing college-level math.
Social studies	3 credits	3 credits	Passing the U.S. and Missouri Constitutions tests and an American Civics exam	Social studies coursework should emphasize American history, Missouri government, and Missouri history.
Science	3 credits	3 credits		Biology, chemistry, and physics with at least one lab class are strongly recommended.
Fine arts	1 credit	1 credit		
Physical education	1 credit	1 credit	30 minutes of CPR instruction and training in the Heimlich maneuver	
Practical arts	1 credit	1 credit		
Health	1/2 credit	1/2 credit		
Personal finance	1/2 credit	1/2 credit		
Electives	7 credits	6 credits		Two units of credit in a single foreign language are recommended.
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>24 credits</b>	<b>24 credits</b>		

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE FOR STUDENTS

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### FRESHMAN YEAR

- Become familiar with graduation requirements of your school and your state.
- Make a four-year coursework plan.
- Begin researching colleges/universities (majors offered, location, size, cost, etc.).
- Participate in activities you can include in your college application (community service, sports, or other extracurricular activities).
- Memorize your Social Security number.

### SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Get a part-time job if possible.
- Take the PSAT in October for practice.
- Review your four-year plan, increasing challenges if necessary.
- Create a financial plan with your parents.
- Narrow down potential colleges/universities, requesting information from their admissions offices.
- Attend enrollment events at potential colleges/universities when possible.
- Arrange for summer visits to college financial aid offices.
- Increase participation in extracurricular activities, especially during summer.
- Visit your school counselor to discuss college/career options.

### JUNIOR YEAR

- Attend college days at potential college/university. Visit financial aid office.
- Review your four-year plan and coursework. Increase challenges if necessary. Investigate AP classes, GPA ranking, and dual-credit options.
- Research scholarship opportunities.
- Visit your school counselor to discuss college/career options.

### Summer—October

- Get a part-time job to save money for college.
- Complete a self-evaluation of your personality, interests, values, abilities, and spiritual direction.
- Discuss college options with parents and teachers. Visit colleges if possible.
- Take driver's ed classes.

### September—November

- Take the PSAT in October for scholarship monies.
- Improve weak areas in the PSAT to prepare for the SAT/ACT.
- Check admissions requirements of potential colleges. Know whether they accept ACT or SAT test results. (Most accept either.)
- Study SAT/ACT prep material to determine which testing format you prefer.
- Register for May or June testing.

### December

- Narrow down college preference list.
- Request applications from potential colleges.
- Study admissions standards of preferred colleges.

### March—May

- Select challenging courses for your senior year.
- Take SAT/ACT.

### Summer

- Visit preferred colleges if possible.
- Prepare a resume of accomplishments, activities, work experience, etc.
- Prepare an essay of lifelong learning intentions and explain why these are your goals.

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## SENIOR YEAR

- Continue working to save money.
- Research/apply for all applicable scholarships and turn in applications by required deadlines.
- Parents: Pull your income tax information from the previous filing year and complete the FAFSA when it becomes available October 1.
- Parents: You should receive your SAR (Student Aid Report) within three weeks of completing the FAFSA. If not, contact FAFSA.
- Order second-semester transcript to send to prospective college(s).
- Register for any summer classes needed and transfer credits.

### September

- Attend college fairs online or in-person.
- Investigate scholarship opportunities.
- Update and perfect college essays.
- Ask counselor/teachers for recommendation letters. Order transcripts.
- Register online for the October and November SAT/ACT.

### October

- Fill out college applications, concentrating on essays.
- Complete applications to meet any November 1 deadlines.
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers and others.
- Parents: Submit FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 and before the government or college deadline, whichever is sooner.
- Send SAT/ACT test scores to four or more preferred colleges.
- Keep copies of everything submitted to colleges.

### November—February

- Research college financing (work study, grants, parent PLUS loans, etc.).
- Complete applications to meet any January 1 or February 1 deadlines.
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### **March—April**

- Most colleges notify students of admissions decisions during these months.
- Decide between colleges to which you've been accepted. Weigh annual cost of college and scholarships offered for different colleges.
- Respond by letter to all schools, accepting or declining their offers.

### **May–June**

- Graduate high school.
- Prepare for the transition to college life.

### EXCERPT FROM “THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM”

(Formerly posted on [ibo.org](http://ibo.org))

#### History

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 as a nonprofit educational foundation. A group of talented, forward-thinking teachers at the International School of Geneva, with assistance from several other international schools, created the IB Diploma Program. What started life as a single program for internationally mobile students preparing for university, has today grown into three programs for students aged 3 to 19.

The program in the early days consisted of a common pre-university curriculum and a common set of external examinations for students in schools throughout the world, seeking to provide students with a truly international education. Although the first IB schools were predominantly private international schools, they included a very small number of private national institutions and schools belonging to state education departments. This has changed over the years and today over half of all IB World Schools (authorized to offer one or more of our programs) are state schools.

Although the first IB schools were predominantly private international schools, today over half of all IB World Schools are state schools. Carrying forward the ideals and dreams of the IB founders, the organization exists to provide high quality education for a better world, as expressed in our mission statement. IB programs continue to encourage this international-mindedness in students and educators through the IB learner profile—a set of values that represent our mission and principles.

#### About IB

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) offers high quality programs of international education to a worldwide community of schools. Our three programs for students aged 3 to 19 help develop the intellectual, personal, emotional, and social skills to live, learn, and work in a rapidly globalizing world. There are more than 854,000 IB students at 3,033 schools in 139 countries.

#### Mission and Strategy

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) is more than its three educational programs. At our heart, we are motivated by a mission to create a better world through education. We value our hard-earned reputation for quality, for high standards and for pedagogical leadership. We achieve our goals by working with partners and by actively involving our stakeholders, particularly teachers. We promote intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century. All of this is captured in our mission statement.

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



## 5 BENEFITS OF TAKING AP CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL

### EXCERPT FROM “5 BENEFITS OF TAKING AP CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL”

(Original article: [princetonreview.com/college-advice/ap-classes](https://princetonreview.com/college-advice/ap-classes))

Why take an Advanced Placement class? After all, high school is a pressure cooker. You already have to take the SAT, apply to college, and keep up with your extracurriculars. The last thing you may want to do is take a very demanding course, especially one that’s not mandatory. But we recommend you consider it. Here are five ways AP classes can be a smart choice.

**1. Prep for college.** AP classes can be as challenging as introductory college courses. They are fast-paced, cover more material than regular classes, and require independent work like research and analysis. Getting a dose of a college-level curriculum early on could ease your transition from high school senior to first-year college student.

**2. Rise to the top of the pile.** Advanced Placement classes show admissions officers that you’re ready for college-level work. Admissions counselors consistently tell us that good grades and academic rigor are the most important factors when schools evaluate applications. Even over standardized test scores!

**3. Strengthen your transcript.** Many high schools give extra weight to AP grades when calculating your GPA. Taking an AP class and getting a B is often a better choice than getting an A in a regular course.

**4. Study what you love.** There are 38 AP subjects from computer science to Japanese language and culture, although your high school may only offer some of these. If you’re a science whiz, AP Biology or AP Chemistry may give you the extra challenge you crave. If you’re the next Ernest Hemingway, head to AP English. Choosing a subject you’re interested in or have had previous success in will help you commit to the workload.

**5. Get a head start on college requirements (and save some tuition dollars).** Taking an AP class is great prep for the acing the corresponding AP test. Held every May, AP tests are scored on a scale from 1 to 5. If your college offers AP credit, a score of a 4 or higher could allow you to earn college credits without paying college tuition. Some students are able to skip the entire first year of college this way, thus cutting the entire cost of their college education by one quarter.

AP classes can boost your GPA and strengthen your college application. But the number of advanced courses you choose to take should depend on your academic interests and your schedule.

## BENEFITS OF TAKING A GAP YEAR

### EXCERPT FROM “10 REASONS YOU SHOULD TAKE A GAP YEAR” BY SUZY STRUTNER

(Original article: [huffpost.com/entry/gap-year\\_n\\_4325969?guccounter=1](http://huffpost.com/entry/gap-year_n_4325969?guccounter=1))

While it's not common in the U.S., taking a gap year is considered the norm in some countries all over the world, including the United Kingdom and Australia. Many colleges and universities in the U.S. not only accept applicants who choose to take gap years, but also actively encourage enrolled students to study abroad during their college tenures. According to study abroad organization CIEE, Harvard College has seen a 33 percent increase in the number of their incoming students taking gap years.

That might be due, in part, to the school's acceptance letters. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, acceptance letters from Harvard even suggest that students might want to take time off before they enroll.

Taking a gap year between high school and college can be tremendously beneficial to one's personal growth, whether one decides on enrolling in a structured gap year program, spending time volunteering abroad, or simply traveling the world. Regardless, taking a gap year means you're living life to the fullest. Here are 10 reasons why:

**1. You'll perform better in college.** Students might worry that college admissions officials or professors will look down on them for taking a gap year. This isn't true: many schools report that gap year students have higher GPAs and are more involved on campus, so their attitudes toward gap years are far from unfavorable.

**2. You'll realize what you love before you start studying.** More often than not, college students commit themselves to one area of study, realize it's not for them, and then swap to a completely different major—often two or three times. You'll cut down on coursework, tuition bills, and stress if you take time before college to decide how you want to spend your academic experience before you get there.

**3. You'll get to adventure at your prime.** When else are you going to be 18 years old with no job, no mortgage payments, no significant other, no kids, no homework, and no worries? Never. The answer is never.

**4. You'll know what's important in life before most people do.** College is ridiculously fun, but it's easy to get so caught up that you begin to believe your fraternity or friend group is the absolute center of the universe. As such, any small crisis might seem like the end of the world. However, if you've traveled the wider world in all its complexity and glory, you'll understand there are bigger issues for humanity than a failed date night or lost game.

**5. You'll be an expert at adapting to new places.** On a gap year, you'll be forced to integrate into a new society, a new group of friends, and maybe even new languages or cultural norms.

College requires similar adaptation skills, and you'll be much more prepared to handle it if you've already shifted societies once before.

**6. You'll have something to talk about.** Skip the same old "Where are you from?" and "What's your major?" chitchat, and nail the "What'd you do this summer?" question with stories from your gap year. You'll have firsthand opinions to share about people, places, and ideas that your peers might have never even heard of.

**7. You'll have a shinier resume.** Oftentimes, a gap year involves staying in one spot and soaking up its culture, part of which means getting a job. No matter where you work—a sandwich stand in India or the embassy in London—you'll have valuable (international) experience for your resume and can explain your ability to do business with customers from different cultures. If you travel on the cheap, you might even have some earnings left to use on college tuition.

**8. You'll pick up the pieces you missed in high school.** Did you sleep through every Spanish class? Head to Argentina for your gap year, where you'll be forced to speak the language every day. Do you wish you knew more history? Spend time touring government buildings in Europe. A gap year is your time to refine the specific skills you feel like you're lacking and sharpen them up for college.

**9. You'll have time to think.** Life feels like it's unfolding fast right now, and in college, things only move faster. Give yourself room to think and breathe on long train rides from country to country or in days spent strolling through new towns. You'll be surprised where your mind wanders when you give it free rein.

**10. You'll make new friends.** How cool would it be to go through life knowing you have a best friend in Italy or a pen pal in New Zealand? Their unique perspectives on life will hugely enrich yours as you compare all the major events that happen in your 20s and beyond. Plus, you'll have crazy awesome places to visit during college breaks.

## BENEFITS OF TAKING DUAL CREDITS

### EXCERPT FROM “THE TOP 10 BENEFITS OF EARNING DUAL CREDIT THIS YEAR” BY BECKY MULDROW AND THE DUAL CREDIT AT-HOME TEAM

(Original article: [dualcreditathome.com/2016/08/top-10-benefits-earning-dual-credit-year/](http://dualcreditathome.com/2016/08/top-10-benefits-earning-dual-credit-year/))

Wondering if earning dual credit should be part of your educational plan this year? Dual credit programs are a great way for high school students to get a head start on their college education, enabling them to earn high school and college credits at the same time.

**1. Dual credit options provide significant savings** over a traditional college education. The cost of a college education has skyrocketed in recent years, making it harder and harder for students and families to afford the tuition of a four-year college program. Dual credit options offer a huge savings, enabling students to earn college credits without enrolling in a full-time college degree program.

**2. High school students can begin their college education earlier.** Many students who complete dual credit programs in high school are able to earn a college degree while they are still teenagers.

**3. Students study high school subjects at a college level.** Instead of studying general education subjects in high school and then studying them again in college, students can earn college credits for studying high school subjects at a more advanced level.

**4. The transition from high school to college is easier for most students who earn dual credit.** Dual credit students learn valuable skills that help them transition from high school to college. They work independently, learn important research and test-taking skills, and become expert note-takers.

**5. Students can explore their academic interests in-depth before entering college.** Exploring college-level classes while still in high school will give students an opportunity to discover new academic interests before entering college.

**7. Earn college credits without exposure to some of the negative aspects of life on campus.** College life isn't for everyone—at least not all aspects of college life. For many, the typical antics that take place on a college campus are a huge turn-off. Dual Credit at Home allows students to avoid some of these aspects of college life and focus entirely on their studies.

**9. If you choose to enter college after completing a dual credit program you can take advantage of freshman scholarships.** It's no secret that most college scholarships are available to incoming freshmen, not transfer students. By choosing the dual credit option *while still in high school*, you can earn college credits, but still be classified as a freshman for scholarships and financial aid.

## VOCATIONAL TRADE SCHOOL

### **AN EXCERPT FROM “WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING?” BY DR. KELLY S. MEIER**

(Original article: [theclassroom.com/benefits-vocational-training-8014338.html](http://theclassroom.com/benefits-vocational-training-8014338.html))

If you aren't sure that a university experience is right for you, consider vocational training. Focused on developing specific skills in career fields like auto repair, cosmetology, welding, medical billing, and more, you can earn your degree in two years or less.

#### **Benefits of Vocational Education**

There are many advantages of vocational education. Your classes will focus on the knowledge and skills you need for a particular job, and the time and money you expend is less than a four-year college program.

One of the benefits of vocational training is that you can jump right into classes that speak to your career passions. Unlike a university degree, you won't have to take general education classes unrelated to your career field. The reduced seat time for most certificates and degrees means you'll begin learning new skills right away.

#### **Gain Practical Experience**

One advantage of vocational training is instructors are often industry professionals. The opportunity to learn from someone who works in the field will give you deep insight about what it takes to be successful on the job. Most programs include externships that allow you to work in the industry for course credit. You may earn an apprenticeship or even a job as a result of this practical experience.

#### **Get a Flexible Class Schedule**

Vocational training is designed to help nontraditional students go to school while juggling a job or family. Flexible class schedules include options for evening, weekend, and online education. If you are trying to develop new career expertise, you can continue to work full-time while going to school.

#### **Enter the Work World Quickly**

Another advantage of vocational education is you can complete your training quickly. Program times vary, but for example, if you want to be an emergency medical technician, you can be ready to work after going to school for one semester.

## SAT VS. ACT COMPARISON CHART

CREATED BY BETHANIE SKIPPER, M.ED.

These exams are general prerequisites in applying for college in the United States. It is important early on in high school to familiarize yourself with the differences. Typically, students take the practice test in their sophomore year and then start taking the test during spring of their junior year.

Details	SAT	ACT
<b>Highest Possible Score</b>	1600	36
<b>National Average</b>	1060	21
<b>Time to Complete</b>	3 hours plus 50-minute essay (optional)	2 hours and 55 minutes plus 40-minute essay (optional)
<b>Subjects Included</b>	Reading: 65 minutes Writing and Language: 35 minutes Math No Calculator: 25 minutes Math Calculator: 55 minutes Essay (optional): 50 minutes	English: 45 minutes Math: 60 minutes Reading: 35 minutes Science: 35 minutes Writing (optional): 40 minutes
<b>Number of Questions</b>	154	215
<b>Content</b>	Vocabulary, reason, logic (no science)	Core school subjects
<b>Official Website</b>	<a href="http://collegeboard.org">collegeboard.org</a>	<a href="http://act.org">act.org</a>
<b>Available Testing Dates</b>	August, October, November, December, March, May, June	September, October, December, February, April, June, July
<b>Registration Deadline</b>	At least 4 weeks before the test date	At least 5 weeks before the test date

## COLLEGES, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **ACT**—[act.org](https://act.org)

Information on the ACT test, including registration, test prep, and scores.

### **Assemblies of God Colleges**—[colleges.ag.org/Directory](https://colleges.ag.org/Directory)

Locations and links to all U.S. AG colleges.

### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**—[studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa)

To apply for federal student financial aid and state student aid programs, students must complete a FAFSA to determine eligibility.

### **Gap Year Association**—[gapyearassociation.org](https://gapyearassociation.org)

Provides information and tips as well as additional resources and programs to make your gap year beneficial.

### **International Baccalaureate**—[ibo.org](https://ibo.org)

IB offers three programs of international education from early childhood to pre-university age. Site offers search engine for each program and schools who offer IB programs in countries around the world.

### **The Princeton Review**—[princetonreview.com](https://princetonreview.com)

Provides personalized, innovative, best-in-class private tutoring, test prep, and admission products and services to help students knock down barriers and achieve their academic goals.

### **SAT Assessments**—[collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat)

Provides information about locations and registration for the SAT. Also provides test-taking tips and other resources.

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## ONLINE SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH ENGINES:

### **CollegeNET**—[collegenet.com](https://collegenet.com)

Sign up for an account to vote for and be eligible to receive scholarship awards.

### **CollegeScholarships.com**—[collegescholarships.com](https://collegescholarships.com)

Check out scholarships for high school, undergraduate, graduate, and international students.

### **Fastweb**—[fastweb.com](https://fastweb.com)

Search over 1.5 million scholarships and learn about financial aid options.

### **Scholarships.com**—[scholarships.com](https://scholarships.com)

Search over 3.7 million college scholarships and grants, and get more information about financial aid.

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## **SCHOLARSHIPS/LOANS**

[agcu.org/stories/scholarship-application](http://agcu.org/stories/scholarship-application)  
[christianmissionaryscholarship.org](http://christianmissionaryscholarship.org)  
[coca-colascholarsfoundation.org/apply](http://coca-colascholarsfoundation.org/apply)  
[gallerycollection.com/greeting-cards-scholarship.htm](http://gallerycollection.com/greeting-cards-scholarship.htm)  
[ronbrown.org](http://ronbrown.org)  
[striveforstudents.com/scholarships.html](http://striveforstudents.com/scholarships.html)  
[telioslaw.com/scholarships](http://telioslaw.com/scholarships)  
[truman.gov](http://truman.gov)  
[salliemae.com/student-loans/](http://salliemae.com/student-loans/)

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## **CAREER INVENTORIES**

[educationplanner.org/students/index.shtml](http://educationplanner.org/students/index.shtml)  
[princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz](http://princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz)  
[truity.com/test/holland-code-career-test](http://truity.com/test/holland-code-career-test)

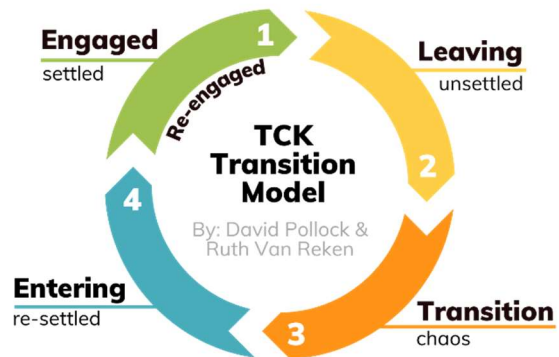


# TRANSITIONS

## THE EDUCATIONAL TRANSITION

### REVISED FROM AN ARTICLE BY DR. BRENDA DICKEY

The success of the educational transitional experience for your child depends on family support and each child's developmental stage. The stages of transition are described in Dave Pollock's book *Third Culture Kids*. MKs will go through these stages as they face any type of life transition: engagement, leaving, transition, entering, and re-engagement. These phases are impacted by the stage of development of the child at the time of the transition. (See Transition Model.)



### Leaving

Parents need to discuss openly their own feelings of sadness with their children about leaving a place that is comfortable and "known." You should also discuss how your close family/friend relationships will change during and after the transition.

### Transition and Entering

Parents should help children focus on making new friendships as quickly as possible. This can be done by intentionally planning a time for children and youth to play games with others and their families or planning an outing together. It is worth the time and cost involved to let children say goodbye to known relationships and take time to develop new ones.

### Reengagement

Settle in a routine of school, church, and community. Extracurricular activities are good for this time (swimming teams, ball teams, art and music, etc). This is especially important during middle and high school adolescent development years. Providing daily family routines and time with supportive relationships can encourage smoother transitions. Parents can use literature to help the transition by reading to their children about other kids who have experienced new transitions. These things can help ease the difficulty of transitions for children and provide opportunity for discussions.

Some helpful literature is provided in the great resource book *New Kid in School* by Debra Rader and Linda Harris Sittig. It provides insight for teachers and parents to use in educational transitions.

## Transition Myths

**Myth 1**—Children will be impacted negatively by transitions; therefore, we need to avoid all transitional experiences.

No! Transitions are a part of life. Those who learn to navigate well during each transition re-engage quickly toward positive life experiences.

**Myth 2**—Children are so resilient that they will find a way to bounce back during all transitions without parental or others intentionally planning for positive engagement experiences.

No! Resiliency skills are taught by intentional planning, supportive modeling of friendship building, and coaching by parents and/or others who are significant to the child in the environment.

The goal is for children to move as quickly as possible from the leaving stage to the re-engagement stage of transition in order to minimize any negative impact on behavior.

## REENTRY SEMINARS FOR STUDENTS

Our office recommends you attend AGWM Missionary Renewal and Reentry along with either Barnabas International's MuKappa Reentry Seminar ([barnabas.org](http://barnabas.org)) or Interaction International Transition Seminar ([interactionintl.org](http://interactionintl.org)). Through these programs, you can learn skills to deal with the various transitions coming up as you adjust to life in the United States.

If you're a high-school graduate, you are eligible to participate in MuKappa or Interaction International reentry programs prior to your first year of college in the United States. The seminar fee and round-trip travel costs are one-time-only expenses and can be paid from your parents' (00) account, accumulating as taxable income.

These seminars help in several ways:

- Reentry after graduation will be the most permanent transition you will make as an MK. If you plan a career in missions, it will most likely take at least eight years to go to the field after college, pastoring, and itineration. Attending a reentry seminar will help you focus on long-term adjustment to life in the United States.
- The U.S. culture has changed in the last four years, and you'll need some help getting up to speed.
- Whether you go to college or find a job (or both), you will need help adjusting to these new subcultures within the overarching U.S. culture.
- This will probably be your first transition without your parents, and a reentry seminar can equip you with the tools you need to make important decisions with confidence.

During the seminars you can participate in group activities and receive personal counseling to treat any individual concerns you may have. Please note, the seminars fill up on a first-come, first-served basis, so sign up right away if you're interested.

## ISMK EDUCATION RESOURCES

The following items are available through the ISMK office via the missionary's (00) account. There is a limit of one of each item per family unit. Additional copies must be purchased as a personal expense. Contact [TCKIEducation@gmail.com](mailto:TCKIEducation@gmail.com) to request a resource or order online [ismk.org](http://ismk.org).

- [Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds](#) by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken (2nd ed.)
- [Raising Resilient MKs](#) by Joyce M. Bowers (Association of Christian Schools International)
- [Fitted Pieces: A Guide for Parents Educating Children Overseas](#) by Janet R. Blomberg and David F. Brooks (SHARE Education Services)

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### Pre-K and Elementary

- [Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day](#) by Judith Viorst
- [Alexander, Who's Not \(Do You Hear Me? I Mean It!\) Going to Move](#) by Judith Viorst
- [Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon](#) by Paula Danziger
- [Before I Leave: A Picture Book](#) by Jessixa Bagley
- [The Berenstain Bears' Moving Day](#) by Stan and Jan Berenstain
- [Boomer's Big Day](#) by Constance W. McGeorge
- [The Color Monster: A Story About Emotions](#) by Anna Llenas
- [The Feelings Book](#) by Todd Parr
- [Feelings Flash Cards: A Great Way for Kids to Share and Learn About All Kinds of Emotions](#) by Todd Parr
- [Grandfather's Journey](#) by Allen Say
- [Good-bye, House](#) by Robin Ballard
- [Harold and Stanley Say Goodbye](#) by Jill Dyer
- [Have You Filled a Bucket Today?: A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids](#) by Carol McCloud
- [I'm New Here](#) by Bud Howlett
- [In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson](#) by Bette Bao Lord
- [Ira Says Goodbye](#) by Bernard Weber
- [Let's Move Overseas](#) by Beverly Roman
- [Little Critter: We Are Moving](#) by Mercer Mayer
- [The Lost and Found House](#) by Michael Cadnum
- [My Many Colored Days](#) by Dr. Seuss
- [Moving to the Neighborhood \(Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood\)](#) by Alexandra Cassel
- [One Thing Never Changes](#) by Shawn Strannigan
- [Peanut Butter Friends in a Chop Suey World](#) by Deb Brammer
- [We're Going Home/I Don't Want to Go Home: Reentry for Elementary Children With a Parent's Guide](#) by Ron and Bonnie Koteskey
- [When Africa Was Home](#) by Karen L. Williams

- [Where in the World Are You Going?](#) by Judith M. Blohm
- [Yang the Third and Her Impossible Family](#) by Lensey Namioka

### Teen and College

-  [Don't Pig Out on Junk Food: The MK's Guide to Survival in the U.S.](#) by Alma Gordon, 1993
- [Families on the Move: Growing Up Overseas and Loving It](#) by Marion Knell, 2001
- [Footsteps Around the World: Relocation Tips for Teens](#) by Beverly D. Roman, 1999
- [Homesick: My Own Story](#) by Jean Fritz, 1982
- [I Have to Be Perfect](#) by Timothy L. Sanford
-  [Raising Global Nomads: Parenting Abroad in an On-Demand World](#) by Robin Pascoe, 2006
- [Rip Van Winkle](#) by Washington Irving 1999
- [Someone With You](#) by Larry Libby, 1998
-  [Third Culture Kids and Adolescence: Cultural Creations](#) by Ronald Koteskey, 2009
-  [Understanding Adolescence](#) by Ronald Koteskey, 1987, revised 2009
- [The Year My Parents Ruined My Life](#) by Martha Freeman, 1997

 **These titles can be read alone by the MK or aloud by a parent with the child.**

## MK EDUCATION TRANSITIONS

By Dr. Brenda Dickey

Preparing MKs for education transitions is important when considering moving, especially around the world. It will help your child's transition if you have a long-range educational plan in place.

The information below is broken into developmental stages with tips to help your child if you are transitioning overseas or back to the U.S. during one of these stages.

### **Early Elementary (Grades K–5)**

These years are packed with learning to read and write and establishing math conceptualization for later learning success. Developing a strong reading base in the student's first language is the foundation for successful learning in later developmental years.

This is the time that children learn to love culture and languages. Play time, interaction with cultural groups, and extracurricular activities (music, art, sports) provide the best opportunities for learning languages and enjoying culture. Language development takes place naturally during these early years.

It is important to make an advance plan when you know your child will be transitioning to a new or different type of school. Your child's portfolio will provide good information to help a new school place your child.

### **Middle School (Grades 6–8)**

These years are critical for identity development. Activities including music, art, and sports should encourage strong friendships that help build personal identity.

Students tend to identify with their first language culture at this age. It cannot be stressed enough how important family involvement is during these years to help children develop healthy identities. It is also important to use this time to teach the history and culture of the passport culture along with encouraging long-distance family ties. This can be done while you are overseas, but it is important not to neglect this. If this stage occurs during itineration, there are many opportunities to build church "family" support via strong youth groups and children's programs.

### **High School (Grades 9–12)**

Academic credits are important during these years, so it is critical to plan appropriately. Allow your child to complete a full year of high school before transitioning to another school setting so the student will receive full credit for coursework completed instead of half credits. Some schools may offer the same subjects but divide the semesters differently. This could affect the number of credits awarded for a class.

When considering a school transition, it is important to remember every school may require different subjects to be completed before graduation. The parent and student should investigate the necessary graduation requirements for a particular school that the student may attend.

If you are required to make a transition in the middle of a school year, be sure to keep important information from your child's school (name of school, contact info, report cards, etc.), as well as your child's portfolio.

High school is also the time to begin preparing your MK for their transition to college and adult life. Encourage your high school child to reconnect with family in the United States, especially if they choose to attend a college located near family members.

Remember your child's success through transition partly depends on your support and helping him or her prepare for that transition. The ISMK office is available to offer suggestions and helps if your child is struggling with transition.

## PRACTICAL PARENTING THROUGH THE EDUCATION PROCESS

By Dr. Brenda Dickey

Your MK needs your support through the education process. Research shows that a good social support system at home and school is an important key for education success.

You may assume if your child attends a good school and works hard, that will be enough to achieve academic success, but your home is an important source of support. That includes your guidance in creating positive social opportunities.

It is important to understand how your MK perceives your family support system. For instance, MKs may perceive support in terms of time spent together and listening to their concerns. When you are busy and do not have daily listening time for your student, support for their educational and emotional needs may suffer. This is especially true when your MK interprets time with you as a measure of caring.

If your student begins to develop a lack of interest in school, shows negative behavior, or withdraws from normal activities, there may be a need for special attention. Consistent daily interaction is important to education success.

When a student experiences stress in the school environment, they may need your listening ear. Students often want to talk about their experiences as they process what they are learning. Families who play and spend time together from an early age stay strong when their children go through stressful situations at school. Be willing to adjust your schedule and add or eliminate extra activities to help your child when he or she is struggling. Keep open communication with your child and allow him or her to talk with you about struggles.

If you suspect your child's struggles are related to a learning disability, please feel free to contact the MK office. There are education specialists and resources available for testing and helps if needed.

Help your MK understand the gifts and abilities God has created in them. Provide opportunities to improve those gifts. Do your best to find activities to help your child grow. Encourage them to stretch and improve their skills outside of the classroom. Look for activities like swimming, soccer, baseball, music, and art that your child can participate in and learn to grow.

Keeping open communication, spending regular time together, and playing together as a family will help your MKs stay strong educationally and emotionally. Your ministry is critical and can sometimes be stressful, but if you pour into your children they will succeed in school and learn to handle transition and change well.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### GENERAL EDUCATION QUESTIONS

The ISMK Education Team is available for your education needs. We will do our best to answer your questions or direct you to someone who can help you.

ISMK Education Team  
1445 North Boonville Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65802  
417-862-2781, Ext. 2395  
[TCKIEducation@gmail.com](mailto:TCKIEducation@gmail.com)  
[ismk.org](http://ismk.org) and [tcki.org](http://tcki.org)

### AGWM MK EDUCATION POLICIES

For the most updated policies regarding MK education, consult your *Missionary Handbook* or direct questions to your area or regional director's office.

### AGWM MK EDUCATION FINANCIAL OR BUDGET QUESTIONS

For questions regarding MK education finances and budgets, contact your area or regional director and/or your regional accountant.

### MISSIONARY ASSOCIATE EDUCATION AND BUDGET QUESTIONS

If you are a missionary associate, direct education budget questions to your MA regional accountant.



FOR MORE EDUCATION  
RESOURCES:

[ISMK.ORG](http://ISMK.ORG) | [TCKI.ORG](http://TCKI.ORG)