

The Crown Focus



In this issue

Julia Love and Lisa Johnson
on navigating the complex world of international education

Joanne Danehl
discusses taking children on international assignments

A comprehensive guide to schooling
from our worldwide relocation experts

Fraser Muir
Reveals how to make the most of international education



Go knowing

Message from Nick Tribe

At Crown Relocations we focus on making sure that everyone who's moving knows the what, the how, the why and the when. It's part of our brand promise to make sure that all of our clients really "Go knowing", wherever in the world that may be. Any relocation is a big change for everyone involved, but probably none more so than for the children. Leaving the familiarity of friends, family and their routines at school is a huge upheaval, which can initially outweigh the excitement of the adventure ahead.

For the parents, making sure that they are able to paint as clear a picture as possible for their children about what the new school will be like, makes a huge difference. And our education edition of The Crown Focus aims to help with some top tips, information and experience from our years of helping families settle into their new lives.

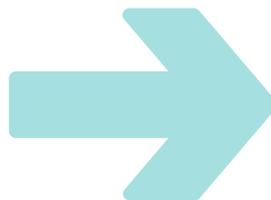
It's great to hear from Lisa Johnson with an article on international schooling, "School Rules: Simple steps for navigating the complex world of international education", with invaluable advice for parents and some interesting views on the benefits of being Third Culture Kids, "TCKs."

Even at a young age, adapting to a new culture easily can never be taken for granted, even when moving to a country where there is a common language. In this issue, Joanne Danehl looks at some of the obvious and the less apparent pitfalls of relocating children internationally. There are some great tips for creating a simple plan to lessen the effects of any "cultural shock" that children might experience.

Where children are concerned, it's always practical advice that is welcome. This edition takes a look at the school systems in Australia, Hong Kong and India, including the different options available, in our Education Guides section.

Finally we hear from Fraser Muir, who not only "survived" an international education, but tells us how it has helped him thrive. Via the U.S., Czech Republic, boarding school back in the UK and then back to the U.S., the interview with Fraser is a great insight into what it's actually like to be educated away from your "home" country. We wish Fraser good luck with his finals at UC Berkeley and look forward to finding out where in the world he will end up next.

Nick Tribe, Editor
Head of Brand and Marketing Services, based in the UK.





Contents

4 **School rules**

Simple steps for navigating the complex world of international education

8 **Everything will be OK ... if I get a puppy**

Top tips for taking children on international assignments

10 **Education Guides**

A comprehensive guide to schooling from our worldwide relocation experts

14 **How to make the most of international education: An interview with Fraser Muir**

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David Muir's (Crown's Chief Executive Officer - EMEA) son



The first day of school for any child is full of anxious moments and nervous feelings about the unknown – Will I make friends? Will I know how to find my classrooms? Imagine what this must be like for children who are starting a new school in a new country.

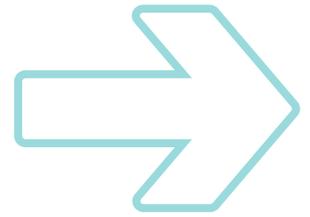
While relocating internationally can be an exciting adventure, it can also be overwhelming for families, and the list of things to think about and manage is very long.

Global mobility programs and policies are designed to provide families with the additional support that they need. But when it comes to education and finding the right school in a city that is unfamiliar, anxiety levels can rise simply because assignee parents and their children are not equipped to know how to even start the process.

This article will examine some of the challenges surrounding international schooling and present a few tips for global mobility professionals and assignee families when navigating the international school experience.



School rules



Simple steps for navigating the complex world of international education

Authors: Julia Love, Director of Admissions, International School of Kuala Lumpur, and Lisa Johnson, Global Practice Leader of Crown World Mobility's Consulting Group.



Background

In the most recent Employee Relocation Council (ERC) and Towers Perrin Global Talent Mobility Study, education was identified as the top challenge faced by international assignees. If the family is settled, the working parent can be more productive and the international assignment will inevitably have a greater chance of success.

But what about the children?

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is an individual who has spent a significant amount of their developmental years in a culture other than that of their parents.

TCKs grow up knowing that they have to change their behavior, language and customs to suit the situation.

It is not surprising to learn that TCKs are four times more likely to complete a university education. Statistics confirm that 70% of students who grew up on overseas assignments reached a higher level of education than their peers at home, and 97% continued with further education (Source: Pollock & Van Reken, *Third Culture Kids*).

“On average, a Third Culture Kid will move four times by the age of 18.”

Key Traits of Third Culture Kids:

- High degree of adaptability
- More mature than most children their age
- Self-confidence
- Self-awareness
- Risk takers



To help parents to know what to expect, we recommend that the local mobility team member(s) and/or local HR representative take the time to understand the admissions process for the local schools, to know what is required to apply to the school, how decisions are made and what the deadlines are for applying. To ease anxiety for relocating parents, it is often expected that an organization should pay for school application fees.

As soon as your organization becomes aware of an offer of relocation being made to an employee with an accompanying family and school-aged children, it is important to contact the schools to enquire about availability. If the schools are taking appointments, the next step is to arrange for school visits on the family's preview trip to the new location.



Finding the right school

The process of finding a school in a city you don't know is not only daunting, but can be frustrating, especially if there are limited options and long waiting lists.

Consider asking these questions:

- **Size:** Are you looking for a small or a large school?
- **Activities:** Is it important that the schools offer sports, music or arts?
- **Curriculum:** Is the type of curriculum important?
- **Repatriation:** How will the school experience affect your child's transition when it is time to go home?

Talking to parents

There are a number of ways to help families with the school search process, starting with an educated global mobility team. Be sure that the organization's local global mobility team and/or local HR support are up to date about the schools in the host location.

The best way to get to know the schools in host locations is to get to know the admissions contact at each of the schools. Visit the schools and establish a relationship with your organization.

What do schools want to know?

You need to know more than just the date of birth of the children you are supporting so that you can be their advocate. Here are some of the important questions schools will ask, whether you are a HR professional or a parent:

- What is the child's previous school experience and what type of school have they been attending?
- What is the language of instruction of the current school?
- What is the year-group called in the home location (terminology can confuse both the school and the family)?
- Is the child currently receiving additional support for learning or English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

If a student is receiving learning support services, ask the school what they might suggest given the individual needs of the student.

What can you expect from the school?

You should feel comfortable challenging schools to offer a high level of support for TCKs and assignee families, as well as ensure that all schools provide a formal tour and orientation of their facilities.

Make sure that the children know the basics, such as where to find the toilets, how the lunch program is handled, what a daily schedule looks like, what they need to bring to school on the first day, what are their teachers' names, and who can they go to if they have questions.

It is equally important that parents know what to expect:

Some schools offer formal Parent Associations, often called PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations). Similar to the student needs, parents need to know who they can approach with questions, what type of support will be available for their children and how the school will communicate with them.

The school can play a critical role in ensuring that parents are settled in their new location too. Many schools offer welcome committees, or parent support groups. Both are helpful in putting parents in touch with others who speak their native language or have children of similar ages.

Conclusion

The key to the success of finding the right school for assignee children is for global mobility professionals to remember that, in addition to the company, there are three vital stakeholders in the process: the child, the family and the school. To satisfy the needs of each, you have to be well informed:

- Know as much as possible about the child (needs, interests, previous experiences, current situation, etc.)
- Have a thorough understanding of the family's needs and preferences
- Have a good knowledge of the available schools (size, philosophy, availability, approach to teaching, approach to new students, etc.)



A typical school admissions process

Step 1: Visit the school for a tour and to gather information

Step 2: Apply to the school – an application typically includes the following:

- A complete application form and application fee
- Health form
- Previous school records
- Confidential reference
- Parent questionnaire
- Copies of passports
- Proof of parent employment
- Possible on-site assessment

Step 3: School decision
– school may ask for further information

Step 4: Family financial commitment
– a non-refundable confirmation fee

Step 5: Orientation arranged by school for student

Step 6: Enrolment

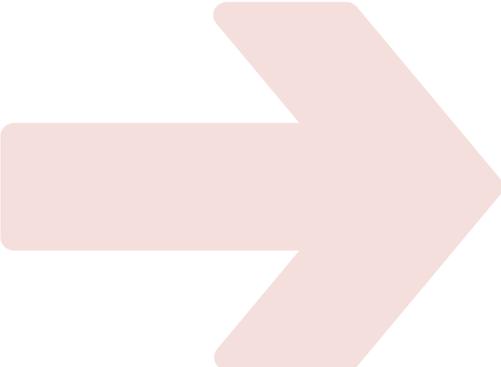




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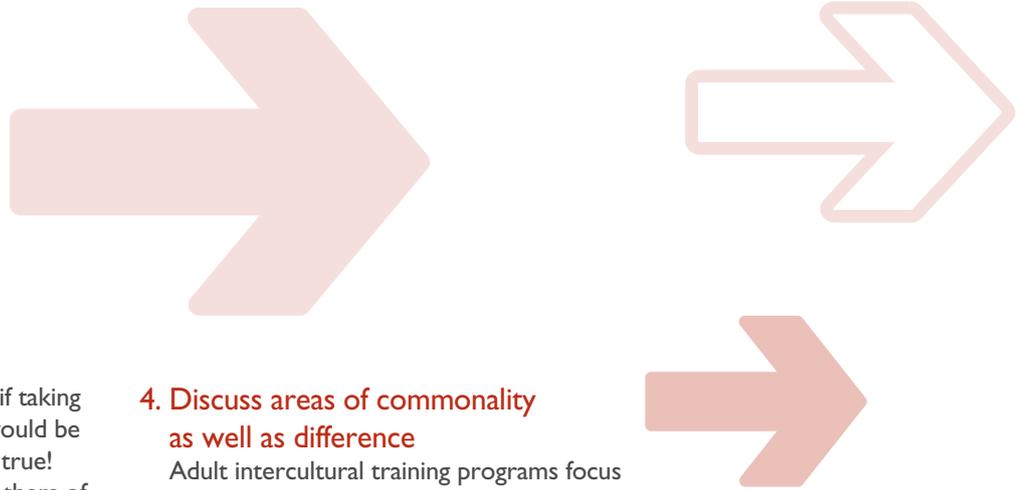
Top tips for taking children on international assignments

Author: Joanne Danehl, Global Practice Leader,
Intercultural and Language Training.



Think back to your first day at school, or your first school play, or taking the stabilizers off your bicycle. These seminal events are imprinted into our memories as being either highly positive or terrifying events that we carry with us in some small way into adult life. Now, imagine if you will, that these experiences are occurring in a foreign country ...





Based on that scenario, it would seem as if taking children on an international assignment would be a terrible idea, but in fact, the opposite is true! Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States wrote, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes”, but perhaps we could add another certainty to the list ... uncertainty. What better way to prepare your child to face the uncertain world than to experience with them the adventure of a new country?

Unless you want to hear the plaintive cry that only the acquisition of a four-legged furry friend will help them settle in, there are a few easy (and far less messy!) steps that you can take to support your child(ren) and ease their transition.

1. Involve children in decisions and research

Chances are the decision to go on an assignment was an “adults only” activity, but now it’s family time. Buy a book on the host country, Google the host city and devise mini-quizzes for the family to generate interest. Feeling competitive? Split your family into teams. The winning team can choose the activity for the first weekend abroad.

2. Learn the language

Children have an amazing capacity to learn a second language and it is a wonderful way to access a new country and culture. It is also a great way to boost confidence if you can function at a basic level as soon as you land in your new home. If your company is supporting language provision within your policy, take them up on it!

3. Focus on what can be experienced, not on what will be missed

Missing family and friends will be a certainty for everyone. Children focus on the fabric of their daily lives and leaving all that behind can be overwhelming. Investigating what you can do together in the host country (that you wouldn’t be able to do at home) can give them something to look forward to. The goal is to reduce anxiety and give children a platform to express their concerns.

4. Discuss areas of commonality as well as difference

Adult intercultural training programs focus on bridging behavioral gaps to succeed on assignment, but for children it’s a balance of things that will stay the same as well as things that will be different. An example might be looking at popular culture or whether the children wear school uniforms; anything to make your child(ren) feel as if they can belong ...

5. Don’t shy away from addressing the challenges

Certainly, some locations are more challenging than others but for the children this is a nuance that is not really on their radar. It’s OK to be honest about some of the things that will be challenging. Moving to Brazil? Phone calls might get dropped ... a lot! Moving to the UK? The house will probably be a lot smaller than you are used to. Moving to China? Sure, there’s pollution! Talking honestly about the adventure will help children prepare for the good and the bad.

6. Create a family action plan

Everybody should have a list of things that they want to see/do/achieve before they come back home. When culture shock hits and homesickness is at its worst, that’s the time to tick off something on the list and reinvigorate the family’s commitment to the assignment. If your company supports intercultural training for the adults and then a separate program for your children, ask to spend some time together, if possible, to share what you have learned and create your “family charter.”

7. Plan for the return

Make sure your child(ren) stays in touch with family and friends back home so that when they return, nobody is starting their life from scratch again.

Oh, and #8 ... HAVE FUN!

Education Guides

A comprehensive guide to schooling from our worldwide relocation experts

Education is of paramount concern for parents when considering a move and plays a big part in making relocation a success. For expat children, their new way of life will be very different from what they were used to in their home country, yet one can find and create many similarities to their existing lifestyle.

An added advantage to study abroad is that the experience provides a wealth of new cultural opportunities to enjoy from both the host culture and other international communities.

Parents can help their children adjust to the new culture by timing the move so that children commence school at the beginning of the year when all the children are new - timing is very important for the entire family.

It is also important to visit the schools and see them for yourself, preferably during school hours.

To help you begin your research, Crown Relocations has prepared a comprehensive guide to schooling in three of the frequently selected locations for global assignments: Australia, Hong Kong and India.





School options India

State schools (also known as Public or Government schools) are either partially or fully funded by the State. In India, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act imposes obligations on the appropriate government and local authorities to provide means of education to all children in the six to fourteen age groups. The quality of state schools in India ranges drastically from a few top-notch institutions to the abysmally poor. In addition to this, most schools have a strong focus on academic subjects, with little scope for creativity and extra-



curricular activities tend to be lacking. Local parents tend to have mixed feelings about the public school system and may opt for lower-end private schools. Likewise, many expats in India prefer private or international schools which they believe will meet the educational standards that they have established for their children.

International schools may be the ideal choice for expats who want their children to continue their home-country curriculum. These schools tend to employ experienced teachers from the respective home country who impart similar teaching methods and instructions in their mother tongue. Most of the top international schools have state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure, feature many extracurricular activities and are keen on personal development. Generally, the standard of teaching at these schools is in-line with that of the home (sponsoring) countries, which allows for easy transition between schools.

International schooling situation in India

The majority of the top international schools are located within major cities with high expatriate populations such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Dehra Dun and Pune. Of these schools, most follow international curricula provided by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO, Geneva), Cambridge IGCSE (UK), and the Council of International Schools (CIS, USA).

There are also schools which are operated by foreign governments and embassies which teach in other languages including French, German and Japanese.

You could also check to see if your desired choice of school for your children is accredited by any of the major accreditation bodies for schools in India such as the International Accreditation Organization and the CfBT Education Trust. These bodies work with schools to ensure that they are operating at international standards.

Tuition fees for international schools in India are very high. Fee structures vary from school to school, but expect to pay between US\$ 5,000 and \$22,000 annually, depending upon class level and other factors.

Despite these fees, international schools are high in demand and available spaces usually fill up quickly. For the best chance of enrolment, apply well in advance of the new school year. Enrolment procedures differ but be prepared to submit your child's passport and visa information, health records, previous school records, recommendation letters and a copy of their birth certificate.

School options Australia

Schooling in Australia starts with a Kindergarten or Preparatory year, followed by 12 years of primary and secondary school. Children typically begin school by 5 or 6 years old, and complete their schooling by 17 or 18 years old. The commonality in education throughout Australia is increasing through the implementation and staged roll-out of the new national curriculum from Prep to Year 12. However, until this progressive implementation is



achieved, there will continue to be some variation in actual implementation of the curriculum, delivery modes and school frameworks between States and Territories. In addition to the State and Territories government funded schools, there are also other providers.

Typically there are three main education providers in each state:

- The State Government system
- The Catholic Education system and
- The Independent School sector

In terms of curriculum offerings and assessment frameworks, most schools in the Catholic and Independent sectors align their curriculum and assessment deliveries to the national guidelines. They can however, exercise a degree of flexibility beyond that of government schools. Because of the generally high degree of commonality between State, Catholic and Independent Schools, students in Australia can move comfortably from one system to another, generally with minimal adjustment.

International schooling situation in Australia

In the majority of cases, international schooling is offered through the private sector and whilst not exclusively, these schools generally follow the IB curriculum. Opportunities to attend these schools are restricted by their limited numbers and most are located in capital cities. Some examples are:

- The International School of WA
– www.iswa.wa.edu.au
- Kilmore International School, VIC
– www.kilmore.vic.edu.au
- International Grammar School, NSW
– www.igssyd.nsw.edu.au/newsite3/index.php

There is no single reference point to determine language-based schools availability and their location in Australia. There are a limited number of schools (confined to the capital cities) where curriculum can be offered in bi-lingual modes.

More typically, there are language-based programmes offered by various private sector providers where some instruction around development and consolidation of native languages can be accessed. This is often outside the general education framework, e.g., after school or during Saturday sessions.

In limited cases, there are bi-lingual programmes offered in conventional schooling frameworks.

French-speaking schools in Australia

www.ambafrance-au.org

German-speaking schools in Australia

www.goethe.de/ins/au/lp/lks/spr/enindex.htm

Japanese-speaking school in Sydney

www.sydneyjapaneseschool.nsw.edu.au

Bilingual school Sydney

www.igssyd.nsw.edu.au

To determine accessibility and opportunity for language-based education, schools offering particular languages need to be researched individually.



School options Hong Kong

The education system in Hong Kong offers parents a choice of four alternatives: First are local schools. Such a move should be done as early as possible to minimise the stress on the child. The multilingual capabilities that the child will develop are of enormous benefit. This option is available to parents who hold a valid visa and a Hong Kong Identity card (HKID).

Second is the international school system. This stream is currently the most popular for expatriate families, in particular because it offers an education which is fluid and can cope with different international moves. However, many of these schools have long waiting lists and most require a debenture of some nature. This debenture can either be a corporate or individual family debenture. Alternatively, some schools ask for an annual capital contribution instead.

Third there is the option of the English Schools Foundation (ESF) system. This system adheres to the British curriculum and tends to be a little less expensive than the international schools. However the academic standard is still deemed to be high, and the culture very similar to the international schools.

Last, but not least, there are Boarding Schools. This can be either in Hong Kong or other Asian countries such as Thailand. This is becoming an increasingly popular choice as it offers parents convenience and close access to their children.

This article combines three Education Guides created by our Relocations Consultants.

To read each guide in full, please visit www.crownrelo.com/en-us/page/employee-and-family-services

We also have a series of Kids Guides, written for kids, by kids. For further information, please contact your local Crown Relocations branch.



How to make the most of international education: An interview with Fraser Muir

David Muir's (Crown's Chief Executive Officer - EMEA) son, Fraser, has lived both overseas with his family on assignment and been at boarding school in the UK. This interview reveals Fraser's exclusive views on the benefits, potential pitfalls and how to make the most of international education.

1. On average, "Third Culture Kids" will move four times by the age of 18. Can you provide details of each of your moves? (Where and what did you study?)

When I was two-years old, in 1996, my parents relocated from my home country in the UK to California. I spent the first half of my childhood there. I started school, learned to read and write and became a fully-fledged "all-American" kid. When I was eight, my parents moved back to Europe, to Prague in the Czech Republic. I went to boarding school back in the UK and would spend my time between there and Prague for the school holidays. I stayed in the UK until I finished secondary school and completed my "International Baccalaureate" before attending UC Berkeley two years ago, where I'm now pursuing a degree in Political Science.

2. Do you have any funny or interesting stories to tell?

It's weird to be a fully-fledged adult in one country and a kid again in another. You wouldn't think that things like a drinking age (18-years old in the UK and 21 in the U.S.) would matter, but it's representative of a wider cultural perception about what it means to be an adult and it's a weird feeling to regress after feeling so old.

3. What advice would you give to parents finding the right school for their child(ren)? How important was your previous school experience?

It's difficult to say that there's a universal approach for parents choosing a school because it depends largely on the child. I did well at boarding school because I thrived off the social aspects and the independence it gave me, but it's not right for everyone. Sometimes, it might be better to send a child to the local international school if you're relocating somewhere that yours is not the local language. It can be a huge culture shock for kids moving away from their home country, and that little bit of familiarity that's found in an expat community can be really helpful.

As a result of international education ...

4. Have you adjusted or gained a better understanding of your own values?

Absolutely, I think it's impossible not to re-evaluate how you see the world when you're exposed to so many different facets of it. I think that what I find important nowadays is a result of a mixture of different cultural, social and ideological experiences I've had across my life and across the world.



5. **Have your experiences abroad changed the way you view your own culture?**

I'm not sure I know what my own culture really is anymore. I've never spent more time in one country than any other - I suppose I think of myself as a member of at least two different cultures. In that sense, I've definitely inherited the traits and characteristics of different cultures and that has absolutely impacted how I view the world.

6. **Have multicultural interactions become easier?**

Multicultural interactions are always a challenge, especially if it's with someone from a culture you don't necessarily understand. But, having been in many of these situations before, you certainly learn to be more tolerant, respectful and patient with cultural cues that might seem strange or difficult compared to more westernised ones. It's an invaluable lesson that has helped me make friends many times across the world.

7. **What skills or personality traits have you acquired through your experience? (High degree of adaptability, confidence?)**

Having been to a boarding school since I was nine-years old, I would say that the most valuable skills I've acquired are independence and confidence, especially in social situations. The very nature of that type of environment is conducive to socialising and surviving without being handed everything on a silver platter. Those traits have proved and are continuing to prove extremely valuable as I move from place to place.

8. **Would you agree that experience studying abroad helps students when entering the job market?**

I would, I think having a study abroad program on your resume demonstrates a great deal about the type of person you are to your potential employer. It shows that you are daring and you like a challenge, that you'll put yourself outside of your comfort zone for the sake of an experience and that you're probably far more aware of political, social and economic issues outside your own country. It would be hard to see how studying abroad could not be seen as a positive by an employer.

9. **What advice would you give to "Third Culture Kids" to ensure their experience is not only smooth but also rewarding? What are the small things not to "sweat"?**

You have to roll with the punches. And at first, there are going to be a lot of them. Relocating across the world is a huge challenge and there are going to be a thousand different, tiny, niggling things that are going to irritate you about a new culture, from the language, to the lack of soy milk in the supermarket. But, it's important to realise that it's going to be impossible to emulate your life back home in a different country. If you try, you'll only find yourself more frustrated than ever. You have to accept that life is going to be different, you're going to have to figure out an ancient public transportation system rather than hopping in the car or learn what kind of food is safe on a menu you don't understand. But if you do surrender to the fact that you have no control over these tiny, infuriating details, you may just find a way of life you much prefer to the one you left behind.

10. **Finally, overall, was international education a positive experience? Would you have preferred to be educated at home?**

I absolutely think my education has been a success and that it will continue to be. I've learnt so much more about life, people and the world and although I maybe haven't had the most stable academic upbringing, I wouldn't trade the experiences I've had for better SAT scores, no way.



