

United States Department of State



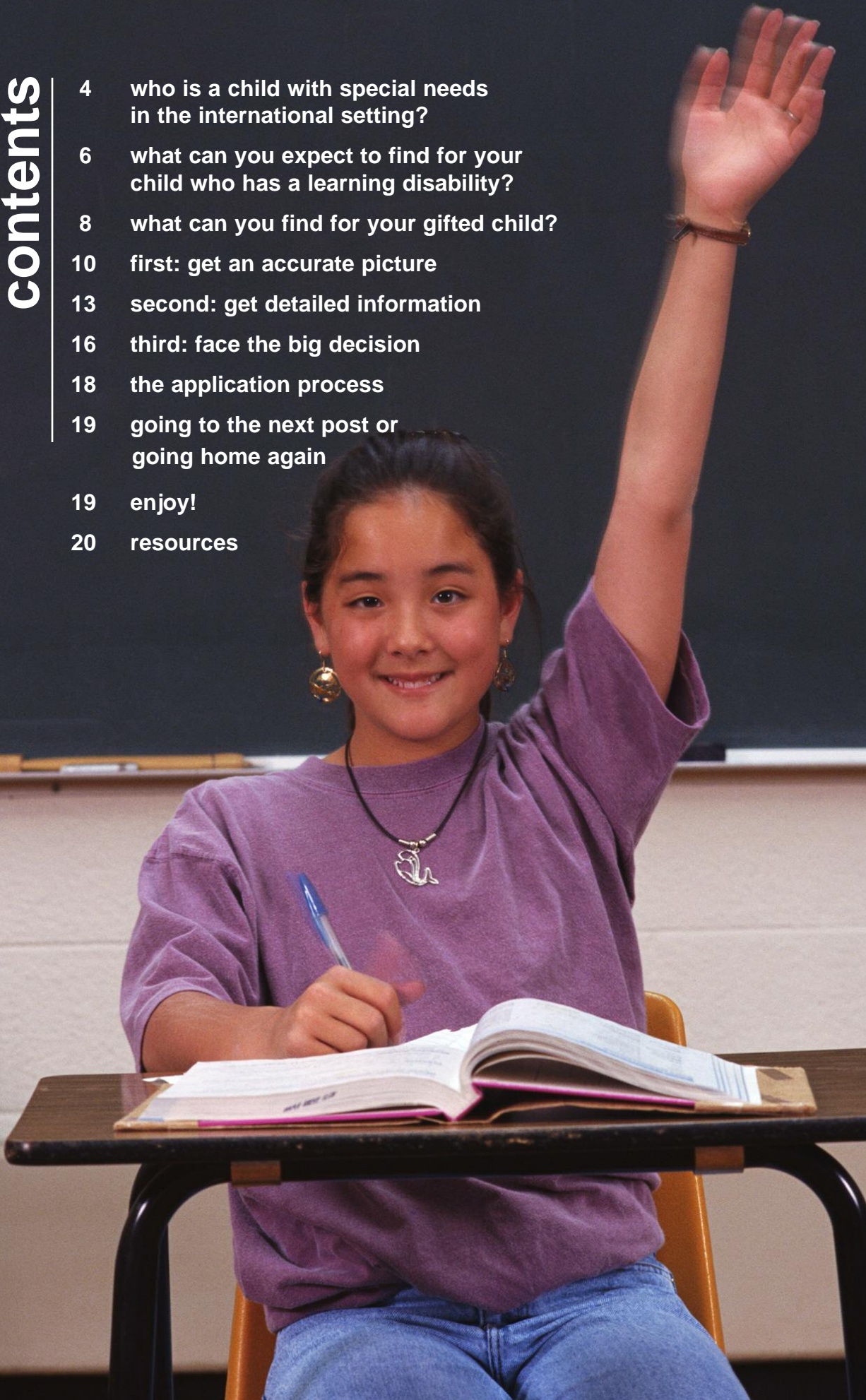
# Transitioning to an Overseas Assignment with a Child with Special Needs





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**E**very year hundreds of U.S. families with children with special needs have to make career-related decisions about *whether* to go overseas and if so, *where*. This booklet is designed to help you think through such decisions and, once you decide whether, when, and where to go, to facilitate your child's transition to the most appropriate school setting (and the biggest welcome) possible. Decide first what is right for your family and then become proactive in facilitating a collaborative relationship with the educators overseas who are going to partner with you in this venture.





**Who is a  
“child with special needs”  
in the international setting?**



While there is no official definition of a “child with special needs,” it can be a child who has problems with learning or it can be a child who is gifted—or some combination of such issues. If your child has problems with learning, behavior, mobility, vision, or hearing; or requires specialized medical care or occupational, physical, or speech therapy; or needs any but very minor adaptations in the regular school routine – then you have a child with “learning disabilities.” If your child needs educational adaptations because he/she is academically more mature and advanced than his/her age peers - then your child is considered “gifted.” While independent overseas schools are under no obligation to assess your child’s special needs in the same way you or your child’s school in the United States does, you should be looking at what

you know about your child and what it takes to keep him or her healthy, growing well, and successful in school.

Most U.S. Government and private sector families abroad place their children in private, independent schools that are not governed by the laws of the United States with regards to whom they must accept or what services they must provide. While you are not limited to American or international independent schools and can consider host-country schools as well as schools of other countries and even home schooling, the American and international schools are more likely to be able to discern whether they will be able to provide your child with adequate educational services.







**What can you expect to find for your child who has a learning disability?**



There have been significant improvements over the years in the willingness and expertise with which overseas schools are able and willing to support children with mild to moderate special needs. Many of them have added a specialist in learning disabilities to their faculty, sometimes offering an hour or two in a special classroom, more often supporting teachers in the regular classroom. Virtually all schools offer special support to English language learners. Much less frequently, you may find a psychologist, speech specialist, or even an occupational therapist on the school staff; more often, there will be links to such professionals in the community, if they exist. You **will not** find the array of specialists you can expect to assist your child in the public schools at home.

Remember that these are independent schools much like mainstream private schools in the United States. They do not necessarily see themselves as serving all children, although they do generally attempt to give special consideration to dependents of U.S. Government employees. The older, larger schools, especially those in well-to-do capitals, tend to be highly selective and academically demanding. While most directors and teachers are sympathetic to incoming students, expectations are relatively high and the support offered to students with special needs, even by specialists, should be seen in that context. Smaller, growing schools may be more flexible but are generally also operating with limited resources,

very much like smaller schools in the United States that are trying to get on their feet.

Additionally, while the faculty is likely to include some U.S.-trained teachers, you can expect a truly international group who will bring a richness of outlooks to the educational scene. They may not, however, see your child with special needs in the same way that U.S.-trained teachers do, may use different terminology and follow different theories, and may not be trained to provide the accommodations that you have found so important in making your child successful. Don't give up, but be prepared for tactful negotiations, and bring as much knowledge as you can to help teachers see that your child can be successful with feasible classroom accommodations.

If your child has attention deficit disorder, and/or quirks of personality that affect classroom behavior, then come with an explicit list of recommended accommodations from a psychologist and previous teachers. (A letter from a previous teacher who had a special feel for your child can be a real help.) Probably not all of these accommodations are going to be put into operation, and almost certainly not all the time. Be patient, and do as much as you can to enable your child to advocate for himself/herself when something would be helpful. Stay in touch with the teacher(s) and continually give positive feedback about things that are happening at school that have value for your child.





**What can you expect to find  
for your gifted child?**



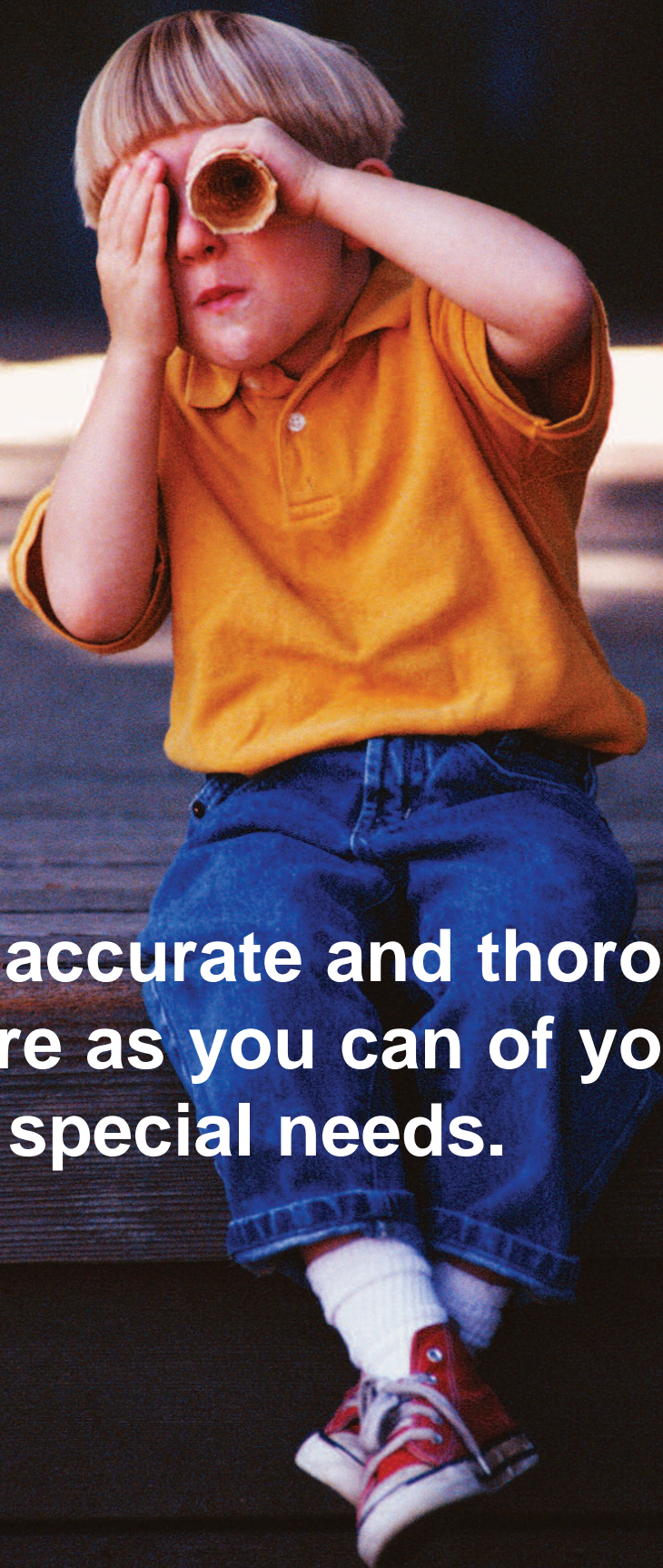
It is often just as difficult to secure accommodations for your gifted child as for a child with a learning disability, although securing admission will be easier. Just as in independent schools in the United States, very few overseas schools have special programs for gifted children. Many schools believe that their curriculum is sufficiently demanding for any student, particularly the highly selective schools and those that offer Advanced Placement classes and/or the International Baccalaureate programs. Keep an open mind. Sometimes they are right!

You need to bring a portfolio of your child's previous work, previous accommodations that have been helpful, and special experiences your child has had. If you know that a particular classroom placement (e.g., a more advanced grade or a more advanced course in one or two subjects) will be important, then try to negotiate that initially. Otherwise, give yourself and your child a few weeks to become acquainted with the school setting.

Often, teachers can differentiate the curriculum experience of the stu-

dents some of the time. Ideally, this will be accomplished by *compacting* (i.e., eliminating segments your child has already mastered, and shortening others that can be learned quickly) and then, with the time saved, *extending and deepening* assignments to match the level and pace of your child's learning. This can sometimes be accomplished by substituting assignments (e.g., reading a different text or novel, modifying a project), by permitting the student to work ahead independently in the text or in the next grade's text, or by importing a more challenging unit of study not usually covered by the class. Because gifted students learn and think like older students, sometimes they can spend part of the day in a higher grade, develop their own projects and share them with the class, or even use on-line courses to substitute for or supplement the usual fare. In addition, participation in cross-age after school clubs such as chess or Junior Great Books, engaging in regional contests or debate leagues, using after-school tutoring in the host-country language and culture, or exploring career options in the community can enrich your child's learning.





**first** | Get as accurate and thorough  
a picture as you can of your  
child's special needs.



**The basic rule:** Develop for yourself a complete picture of your child's strengths and weaknesses, and the supports needed for him or her to be successful. Then, be up front with everyone – stateside and abroad – about your child and about your own expectations. Clear communication will lead to the healthiest situation for all concerned, especially your child.

- ☑ Organize a portfolio for each of your children including, but not limited to, report cards and teacher comments, results of standardized testing, medical records, 504 agreements, brochures about the schools your child has attended, contact names at each school (including postal, telephone, e-mail addresses, and website, if available), out-of-school experiences (e.g., tutoring, summer programs, extracurricular activities), etc.
  - ☑ If your child is in special education in the United States, be sure to secure copies of all reports from psychological and educational assessments and Individual Education Plans (IEP) to share with the school so that personnel can develop an effective educational program.
  - ☑ Obtain an up-to-date comprehensive developmental assessment. Whether through the public school in which your child is currently enrolled or through private auspices, obtain current professional assessments of cognitive ability, school achievement, fine and gross motor skills, language, and whatever other areas you have concerns about, as well as in areas of your child's strengths. Be sure to obtain and share a copy of the **full** report
- not just a summary of scores, but a description of your child's behavior, scores of all the subtests (parts of larger tests) administered, and the psychologist's interpretations and recommendations. If resources are not readily available in your community, contact the Office of Overseas Schools for the names of some assessment centers.
  - ☑ Talk frankly with your child's current teacher and any specialists currently working with him/her. What progress do they see? What services do they see as essential to maintain his or her current developmental trajectory? What, if anything, could be dispensed with? What intervention is likely to make such a minor difference that it should not remain a major consideration? What interventions have worked in the past?
  - ☑ If your child is receiving medication for a health problem, a behavioral problem, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, be sure that the dosage is up-to-date. Begin this process early so that you can arrange for continuity of medication when you go abroad, because even long-used medications (such as Ritalin) may not be available overseas.



- ☑ If your child has been designated by your school district as “gifted”, or you have other evidence that your child is significantly academically advanced, then develop a similar portfolio of assessments and accomplishments. Be sure to include assessments of cognitive ability and academic achievement as well as descriptions of any previous school accommodations or programs, talent-search information, awards, and/or special summer programs. In addition, it is often helpful to include a “snapshot” of what your child is doing, being as objective as you can. This kind of information lends credibility to your request for consideration of acceleration and/or enrichment, such as a request that a child be allowed to bypass a grade, secure single-subject advancement, or receive differentiated instruction in a regular grade. However, it is important to keep in mind that many of the schools overseas are known for their academic rigor, and your child may be significantly challenged in the regular curriculum without participating in a specific gifted program.
- ☑ Find out what allowances and services will be paid for by your employer (governmental or other). You may find that these are quite generous or that there will be services not covered that will affect your family’s budget. Complete as much of this process as you can before you go, so that the school can be prepared to receive your child with services in place.
- ☑ Occasionally a child’s home school district will be able to offer limited services while the child is overseas, particularly if the parents maintain a residence there. At a minimum, you can ask for interchange between the former teacher(s) and the new one(s) about what works with your child and what to avoid. The U.S.-based school district may also be able to offer assistive software for which they hold a license, specific books, etc.



**second**

**Get detailed information  
about potential schools.**





**Start early** to accumulate as much knowledge as you can about the places you are contemplating. Gather information about schools and about any specialized professionals you may need to call upon. You will want to find out not only about the availability of specialists - for example, pediatricians, physical therapists, speech therapists, etc. - but whether their training is compatible with your child's program and whether they speak English fluently (assuming that you and your child habitually speak English).

- Once you have begun a list of possible postings, start with the websites of the American and international schools in the cities you are contemplating. There are regional associations which list the member schools in their area. You can link with a number of these schools as well as the regional associations through the Office of Overseas Schools web site [www.state.gov/m/a/os/](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/).
- Look with particular care at overseas "international" (as opposed to "American") schools. Some are first-rate and some are not. Furthermore, some follow American curricula and others use British or other approaches. (The latter issue may or may not be of significance to your family, depending on whether you plan to stay overseas for the long term or to return home after your first tour of duty.)
- Contact the office of Overseas Schools, e-mail [OverseasSchools@state.gov](mailto:OverseasSchools@state.gov), tel. 202-261-8200. The office maintains direct contact with almost 200 American-sponsored and international schools abroad, and, indirectly through the regional associations, with many more. A special list is kept of additional independent and parochial schools that serve students with special needs, though this information cannot be kept completely up-to-date. For more than 20 years, the Office of Overseas Schools has had a special interest in helping American-sponsored schools expand and upgrade their services to students with special needs. The office can respond to inquiries from both U.S. and non-U.S.-Government families.
- Begin an e-mail dialogue with the appropriate school contact person (this may be the director, the admissions director, a principal, or the person who heads special services). Ask for contact with parents of current or recent students who resemble your child and e-mail them with your questions about not only the school but whether they have found alternatives and supplementary services in the community.
- Be sure to be specific about the grade levels at which your child will be enrolled during your over-


seas assignment. Special needs services are much more likely to be available at the elementary than at the secondary level. Many overseas schools pride themselves on being “college prep” and, however supportive they may have been to younger children, provide only rigorous classes at the upper grades and no assistance whatsoever for students who need assis-

tance with life-skills training such as practical math and reading skills.

- If it might be appropriate for your child with special needs, investigate boarding schools in the United States for your child to attend while other family members fill an overseas assignment.







**third** | Face the big decision:  
balancing career needs  
of parents and the family  
as a whole with the  
needs of the children.

## This may be the hardest part for you: Should you go overseas at all?

With all this information in hand, it is time for a serious parent discussion. Even if you can obtain medical clearance to go to one or more of the posts you are considering, you need to sit down and weigh carefully the career demands you are facing in light of the needs of all your family members. This is a huge issue for some families, especially those in Foreign Service branches of the government in which overseas postings are essential for career advancement. If your child's special needs are such that in fact they can be met without question in the foreign setting, then this won't be a serious issue. But what if they can't, or you're not sure? The situation of the child with special needs occurs in the context of a family. You will also be taking into account the career advantages of the posting, the enriching experience and challenges of overseas living for your other children and family members, and also any disadvantages, such as having to put a spouse's career on the back burner.

There will be many eager to give you advice about the matter, but nobody can make this decision as wisely as you can. Let's be honest: the special needs of some children are so severe, or require such specialized care, that overseas assignments are not possible. More than likely, however, you'll be able to find a posting and school that will work if you start communications as early as possible and make them totally honest. You may, indeed, be surprised at what extraordinary arrangements can be extended, especially to U.S. Government families.





## ■ The application process

Obtain application forms from the school(s) you are considering (often available on their web site). These may include teacher information inquiry forms that will greatly facilitate the process.

*The biggest mistake that families make in going overseas with their child with special needs, is to hide the situation from the school because they fear their child will not be admitted.*

Some parents hope that, once they have made the move, the school will take pity and admit a child they might otherwise have turned down. The usual excuse given for less than total honesty is that the “records are delayed in the mail,” or “are packed with household goods that aren’t here yet.” Such statements are unwise even if slightly true. The records should have been sent with the application. (If you have any doubt about whether they were received, bring copies in your personal luggage.) In these days of telecommunications, all it takes is an inquiry from the new school director to the old one to obtain records and recommendations - and hidden information - almost instantaneously.

Occasionally, especially for children who have behavior problems, parents truly hope that in a new setting, the problems will disappear. They

seldom do. Indeed, the move may temporarily exacerbate the behavior. If teachers are forewarned, however, they can help a troubled child make a good transition much more effectively than if they have to figure out everything from scratch.

When parents are less than up-front, schools are placed in a very difficult situation. They sincerely want to help families and children, and often are able to do so. With enough notice, they can sometimes prepare to serve a child who needs considerable extra assistance. But creating a positive environment for a special-needs child requires an ongoing, active, working partnership between school and parents, and initial - even naïve - deception on the part of parents will not start the partnership off well.



## ■ Going to the next post or going home again

Remember that this whole process needs to be repeated at the close of your overseas assignment. Take care in choosing where your family goes next, and give yourself as much time as possible to prepare the way. Now that you know what it takes to create an effective transition, repeat all these steps with the new school, even if it is an “old” school to which you are returning. (Often personnel will have changed while you’re gone.) If you are going to a new post in the United States, remember that there may be several neighboring school districts to choose from, some of which are more generous with services or more appropriate for your child or children than others. Be choosy.

Be sure to keep a portfolio of all the documents you’ve exchanged with the school – report cards, memos after parent-teacher conferences, records of resource services, test reports, and samples of your child’s work – so that you make the next transition as smoothly as you can. Give the teachers and therapists plenty of time so that they can write summaries which can help to smooth the way when the change occurs.

If you are returning to a public school in the United States and have an address and the required documents that allow you to enroll your child, you should begin a dialogue

with the office in the local school district that deals with special education regarding your child’s special needs. Overseas schools do not have the statutory authority to write a legally valid IEP. Families who are posted abroad need to be aware that their child’s IEP could expire while on the tour of duty. If the IEP expires, the child will need to undergo the determination of eligibility process again when the child returns to the United States in order to re-qualify for special education services. Many overseas schools can write an educational plan that outlines goals and strategies for a child’s education, but this is not the same legal document as an IEP written by a U.S. public school.

## ■ Enjoy!

Although this sounds very complicated, if you have a child with special needs, you are probably already quite accustomed to most of the steps we have recommended. The situation of going overseas is an extension of what you are already used to at home. You are likely to be pleasantly surprised at the quality of the partnership you are able to create with the new school on behalf of your child, in the context of all the mind-expanding possibilities of an expatriate experience. Preparation, openness, optimism, and respect among parents and educators are the essential ingredients for success for everyone in the family. We wish you and your family the very best!





# Resources

## Internet

The Internet provides a rich set of resources to learn more about your child's special needs and available educational resources. Here are just a few websites, with additional resources available at

[www.state.gov/m/a/os/36301.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/36301.htm) and at [www.state.gov/m/dgh2/flo/9856.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dgh2/flo/9856.htm)

### ■ Learning Disabilities

#### General Information

<http://www.nichcy.org>

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities.

<http://woodbinehouse.com/online.html>

Publisher of *The Special Needs Collection* made up of books and other products on disabilities and related topics for parents, children, therapists, health care providers, and teachers.

<http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer>

Autism Society of America.

<http://www.aacap.org/publications/facts-fam/index.htm>

*Facts for Families* published by the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

<http://www.aacap.org/>

*Services in School for Children with Special Needs: What Parents Need to Know* discusses identifying and qualifying children with special needs for special education.

<http://seriweb.com/>

Special Education Resources on the Internet (SERI) is a collection of Internet accessible information

resources of interest to those involved in the fields related to Special Education.

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/specialied>

University of Virginia Curry School of Education gives information and resources on special needs.

<http://www.familyeducation.com>

Site for all children, but contains a section on LD/Special Education issues such as reading challenges, homework strategies and skill building activities, ADD and ADHD, including treatment and medication plans and behavior modification.

<http://www.schwablearning.org/index.asp>

Non-profit foundation that funds programs in learning differences and human services. Site addresses children with identified learning disabilities (LD), AD/HD, and those who struggle with learning.

<http://www.peatc.org>

Parent Advocacy Training Center publishes a newsletter on special needs to which members can subscribe. Site contains numerous parent resources.

<http://specialied.about.com/cs/homeschool>

Numerous articles and links to support and enhance the education of all children with special needs, especially those being homeschooled.

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

[www.ldanatl.org](http://www.ldanatl.org)

Learning Disabilities Association of America.



[www.dec-sped.org/](http://www.dec-sped.org/)

The Division of Early Childhood.

[www.naspcenter.org/](http://www.naspcenter.org/)

National Association of School Psychologists.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/pubListing.cfm?dID=23>

The National Institute of Mental Health.

[www.cldinternational.org](http://www.cldinternational.org)

Council for Learning Disabilities.

[www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

A parent resource with numerous articles about specific learning disabilities and links to more information on disabilities and parent support groups.

## Specific Learning Disabilities,

[www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)

International Dyslexia Association.

[www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

Association for Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

[www.nlda.org](http://www.nlda.org)

Nonverbal Learning Disabilities Association.

## ■ Gifted and Talented

[www.depts.washington.edu/~cscy](http://www.depts.washington.edu/~cscy)

Halbert and Nancy Robinson Center for Young Scholars.

[www.ditd.org](http://www.ditd.org)

The Davidson Institute on Talent Development offers help for families of profoundly gifted children and internet resources for all families of gifted, including many complete articles.

[www.hoagiesgifted.org](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org)

Well-reviewed resources.

[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

National Association for Gifted Children.

[www.giftedbooks.com](http://www.giftedbooks.com) and  
[www.prufrock.com](http://www.prufrock.com)

Publishers specializing in education books for parents, teachers, and educators of gifted, talented, and creative children.

<http://epgy.stanford.edu/ohs/index.html>

Stanford University has established a three-year fully accredited, diploma-granting, online, independent high school for gifted children.

[www.cty.jhu.edu](http://www.cty.jhu.edu)

Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth.

[www.ctd.northwestern.edu/learning/index](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/learning/index)

Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development.

[www.ApexLearning.com](http://www.ApexLearning.com)

On-line standard-based curriculum for secondary education in the core academic subjects and Advanced Placement.

<http://epgy.stanford.edu>

Education Program for Gifted Youth at Stanford University offering multimedia computer-based distance learning courses.

[www.calvertschool.org](http://www.calvertschool.org)

Enrichment coursework which could be incorporated into an independent study period.

[http://eeohawk.unl.edu/ishs/news/new\\_ap\\_courses2.html](http://eeohawk.unl.edu/ishs/news/new_ap_courses2.html)

University of Nebraska Independent High School offers Advanced

Placement courses in English literature and computer science.

[www.greatbooks.com](http://www.greatbooks.com)

Junior Great Books. Develops essential literacy skills; read carefully, think critically, listen intently, speak and write persuasively.

<http://score.rims.k12.ca.us>

Computer software for problem-solving in history and social studies.

[www.tipstore.tip.duke.edu](http://www.tipstore.tip.duke.edu)

Course packages from the Talent Identification Program at Duke University.

[www.SingaporeMath.com](http://www.SingaporeMath.com)

Singapore Math is a challenging program which can be substituted for the regular math curriculum or used for enrichment.

[www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org)

This site offers resources for math enrichment (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics).

[www.challengemath.com](http://www.challengemath.com)

A series of intriguing books designed to enhance a love of math.

## Gifted and Learning Disabled

[www.hoagiesgifted.org/twice\\_exceptional.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/twice_exceptional.htm)

Resources for parents with twice exceptional children.

[www.uniquelygifted.org](http://www.uniquelygifted.org)

Articles, resources and personal experiences for parents with twice exceptional children.

[www.twicegifted.net](http://www.twicegifted.net)

Articles and resources for the parents of twice gifted children.

<http://ericec.org/fact/dualexep.html>

Additional resources.

## Talent Search Organizations

Numerous resources are offered by the organizations that sponsor talent searches, typically for children from fifth to eighth grades. These include:

[www.jhu.edu/gifted](http://www.jhu.edu/gifted)

Johns Hopkins University.

[www.duke.edu/main/academics/programs.html](http://www.duke.edu/main/academics/programs.html)

Duke University's Talent Identification Program (TIP).

[www.ctd.northwestern.edu](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu)

Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University.

## Publications

**Kusuma-Powell, Ochan & Powell, William** (ed.), *Count Me In: Developing Inclusive International School*, Overseas Schools Advisory Council, Washington, D.C., 2000.

This book provides teachers, administrators, parents and students with a practical blueprint of practices for exceptional children based on exemplary international learning theories and research. Although the project began in Africa, it is applicable to students around the world. It can be accessed on the Internet at [www.state.gov/m/a/os/c14528.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/c14528.htm).

**Shaywitz, S.** *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level*, Borzoi, New York, NY, 2003. This book takes advantage of recent brain research that demonstrates the



ways in which dyslexic children differ in their processing of language/reading from other children, explains developmental progressions, and provides abundant strategies for parents and teachers to help dyslexic children become successful.

## Gifted

**Rogers, K. B.**, *Re-forming Gifted Education: Matching the Program to the Child*, Great Potential Press, Scottsdale, AZ, 2001.

A highly informative book for parents about the various models available and the process of matching an education to a child's needs. A must read!

**Ruf, D. L.**, *Losing Our Minds: Gifted Children Left Behind*, Great Potential Press, Scottsdale, AZ, 2005.

A careful description of the characteristics and needs of children at various levels of giftedness – something too often ignored. Largely told through cases. A good resource for parents who are seeking to understand individual differences *among* gifted children.

**Webb, J. T., Amend, E. R., Webb, N. E., Goerss, J., Beljan, P., & Olenchak, F. R.** *Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults*, Great Potential Press, Scottsdale, AZ, 2005.

A valuable resource for parents and professionals who are trying to distinguish behaviors concomitant with giftedness and those concomitant with various psychological disorders.

**Winebrenner, S.**, *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented* (rev. ed.), Free Spirit, Minneapolis, MN, 2000.

This book helps teachers see how to compact the curriculum so that children do not have to spend time re-learning what they already know well, and how to extend and deepen the curriculum. It is also a good introduction for parents seeking to understand how differentiated efforts in the classroom can help their children.

## Gifted and Learning Disabled

**Silverman, L. K.**, *Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner*, DeLeon, Denver, CO, 2002.

Silverman applies her abundant clinical experience to understanding the plight of children who are high spatial/lower verbal (the opposite of the usual pattern found in children accepted for gifted programs) and helping them cope with a world that isn't designed very well for them.

## Children's Temperament

**Carey, William B. with Jablow, Martha M.**, *Understanding Your Child's Temperament*, Simon & Schuster MacMillan, New York, NY, 1998.

William Carey, M.D., heads the Behavioral Pediatrics program at The Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. Based on his many years as a practicing pediatrician, he shows how understanding individual differences in temperament can help parents work with children

with particular temperaments or behavioral styles. The book is written specifically for parents and contains useful and common sense suggestions.

**Kristal, Jan**, *The Temperament Perspective: Working with Children's Behavioral Style*, Paul Brookes, Baltimore, MD, 2005.

A comprehensive discussion of temperament theory and applications. Based on her own research and clinical experience, Kristal describes temperament from infancy through the school years, showing how temperament contributes to children's adjustment and behavior. There are many examples of temperament types and suggestions for parents.

**Kurcinka, Mary Sheedy**, *Raising Your Spirited Child*, Harper Collins, New York, NY, 1998.

Practical suggestions and strategies for parents when interacting with a highly active, intense, energetic, and "challenging" children. The book is based on Kurcinka's extensive experience working with parents, children, and families, and is filled with useful insights and recommendations.

## Resources within the Department of State

[www.state.gov/m/a/os](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os)

Office of Overseas Schools. This site contains links to information and additional resources on special needs, to the regional education officers, to one-page fact sheets for all the schools assisted by the Department of State with links to their e-mail and web sites, and to education associations and organizations with useful information on transitioning overseas.

[www.state.gov/documents/organization/9960.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/9960.pdf)

*Guidelines for Evaluating Children with Learning Disabilities or Developmental Delays*

[www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm)

Family Liaison Office, Education and Youth. This site contains a variety of information specifically related to educating the Foreign Service child, including gifted education, home-schooling, special educational needs, relocation, and third culture kids.

[www.state.gov/m/a/als/1740.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/1740.htm)

Office of Allowances, Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) on education. This site contains information on educational allowances available to civilian employees of the U.S. Government and their families.

[www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/c1992.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/rsrscs/c1992.htm)

The Family Liaison Office has compiled numerous links to organizations that are helpful to the internationally mobile family.

## Resources about Living Abroad

These do not deal with special-needs children but may help you anticipate some of the complexities you'll be facing as you prepare for the international move and raise children in the overseas environment.

**Gopnik, A.**, *Paris to the Moon*, Random House, New York, New York, 2000.

A personal, good-humored account of one young family living abroad. Much of this was originally published in the *New Yorker*.



**Jehle-Caitcheon**, Ngaire, *Parenting Abroad*, Aletheia Publications, Putnam Valley, New York, 2003. Written by an expatriate who lived abroad for twenty-six years, this guide provides useful insights on the many and complicated issues that arise as one raises children abroad.

**Kalb**, Rosalind and Welch, Penelope, *Moving Your Family Overseas*, Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth, Maine, 1992. <http://interculturalpress.com>  
The authors of this book are Americans who draw on their personal experiences to balance general advice and detailed suggestions as they explore the major issues in raising children in the internationally mobile lifestyle.

**McCluskey**, Karen C., ed., *Notes from a Traveling Childhood*, Foreign Service Youth Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1994. [www.fsyf.org](http://www.fsyf.org)  
This paperback is an anthology of writings by parents, children, educators, researchers, and mental health professionals about the effects of international mobility on children.

**Meltzer**, Gail and Grandjean, Elaine, *The Moving Experience: A Practical Guide to Psychological Survival*, Multilingual Matters, Ltd., Cleveland, England, 1989. This book gives practical suggestions for surviving the psychological stresses and challenges of moving for both local and international moves.

**Parker**, Elizabeth and Rumrill-Teece, Katharine, *Here Today There Tomorrow: A Training Manual for Working with Internationally Mobile Youth*, Foreign Service Youth Foundation, Washington, D.C., 2001. [www.fsyf.org](http://www.fsyf.org)

This manual is designed to help facilitators provide a framework for mobile teenagers to interact with each other and to deal with relocation and cross-cultural issues that affect their identity and worldview.

**Pollack**, David C. and Van Reken, Ruth, *The Third Culture Kid Experience*, Intercultural Press, Inc., Yarmouth, Maine, 1999. <http://interculturalpress.com>

Based on both research and the personal stories of countless individuals, this book fully explores the various implications of growing up abroad as a “Third Culture Kid.” The authors are internationally considered to be leaders and experts in the field of TCK studies.

**Seaman**, Paul Asbury, *Paper Airplanes in the Himalayas – The Unfinished Path Home*, Cross Cultural Publications, Inc., South Bend, Indiana, 1997.

An autobiographical account by a “Third Culture Kid” of his journey from his childhood in Pakistan, to boarding school for missionary kids to the struggle in his adult years to find a sense of belonging. Recounts one man’s struggles to find peace with the “Third Culture Kid” experience.

**Taber, Sara M.** *Of Many Lands: Journal of a Traveling Childhood*, Foreign Service Youth Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1997.

[www.fsyf.org/](http://www.fsyf.org/)

A journal for people brought up in foreign countries. It is designed as a learning and exploration tool to help those of many lands in the long process of putting together the stories of their lives. It consists of excerpts that describe experiences the author had at different ages in different countries, followed by prompts or questions designed to evoke the reader's own life experiences.

**Westphal, C.** *A Family Year Abroad: How to Live Outside the Borders*. Great Potential Press. [www.giftedbooks.com](http://www.giftedbooks.com), 2001.

This paperback book is part narrative of a family's year abroad and part instruction manual for individuals and families considering spending an extended period outside their country.

## Returning Home

**Copeland, Anne (Ph.D.) and Bennett, Georgia.** *Understanding American Schools: The Answers to Newcomer's Most Frequently Asked Question*, The Interchange Institute, Brookline, Massachusetts, 2001. <http://www.interchangeinstitute.org/html/schools.htm>

This book guides newcomers to the United States, or those who have been abroad for a long time, about the challenges of understanding the U.S. school system. Foreign born spouses might find this book especially helpful.

**Eakin, Kay Branaman.** *According to My Passport, I'm Coming Home*. Family Liaison Office, Department of State, Washington, D.C., 1998.

This book addresses the challenges faced by children returning "home" from another country and discusses their transitional and reentry needs. It can be accessed at [www.state.gov/documents/organization/2065.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/2065.pdf).

**Smith, Carolyn.** *Strangers at Home: Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land*. Aletheia Publications, Putnam, New York.

The editor of this book is a Foreign Service spouse who understands well the full implications of the internationally nomadic lifestyle. The compilations of essays by others who have been through it offer many insights, as well as practical suggestions for helping children – especially teenagers – to adjust.

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### Transitioning to an Overseas Assignment with a Child with Special Needs

A Topic Paper Prepared by the Advisory Committee on Exceptional Children of the U. S.  
Department of State Office of Overseas Schools  
Nancy M. Robinson, Ph.D., Chair  
July, 2006



















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