

This issue of Educare focuses on useful online resources about various topics relevant to our families. First of all there is a helpful article about sending children to national schools, then a website giving information about educational options, and finally a series of articles on family life. We have highlighted some areas of each website, but recommend further exploration.

Kids in national schools (PACE)

PACE stands for Professional Association of Cross-Cultural Consultants in Education. Melissa Shipman has posted advice gathered from three different mothers whose children are enrolled in national schools. Here are some examples of the points made by the writers.

- Be aware that the educational philosophy of the school may be very different from your passport country. Find out what that philosophy is.
- Realise that there may be more rote learning and 'shaming' of students than you would expect in your home culture.
- Get to know the teachers and act graciously towards them.
- Support your children and seek to encourage them as the adjustment can be difficult.
- Don't expect your children to be missionaries. Take that pressure off them.
- Allow for your children to have adequate rest and sleep. Learning in a new language is tiring.
- Ask your national helpers to explain local cultural material that might appear in homework. It may be bewildering for your children if they don't understand the material – such as local traditional folk tales – that are used for the basis of an assignment. Take a language helper with you to parent-teacher meetings.

At the following link you will find the entire article. There is also a list of previous articles on different topics, well worth exploring.

<https://www.tckconsultant.org/advice-for-a-good-national-school-year/>

Educational options

<https://worldfamilyeducation.com/>

This website, recommended by a colleague from another agency, describes itself as 'a place to explore educational options while living internationally', and is produced by Jonathan and Kari Steffen. It is beautifully illustrated with original watercolour paintings, which help the

browser to keep reading. It contains much helpful information on the different aspects involved in taking a family overseas, with a particular emphasis on education.

Within the *Getting Started* section there are three subtopics: *A Good Plan*, *Perspectives on Education* and *The Options*. Parents are encouraged to look at the long-term picture for their children's education, taking into account their own values and goals, and the fact that each child is unique and 'one size may not fit all'. Consideration is given to the major difference between educational perspectives in different cultures – what is education for, and how should it be provided and delivered? The need to understand the educational perspective of the national school has already been mentioned above with reference to the PACE article. However it is important to identify the underlying goals and 'drivers' of whichever educational system is chosen.

Further sections of the site contain information on international schools, national schools and home education; preparing for university, transitions, special needs, living internationally and family safety. Examples of helpful material from the site are given below.

- International school curriculum options page – there is a summary of the UK system, US system and International Baccalaureate.
- National schools page – there is a section on helping your child learn a new language
- Home education page – this highlights the importance of being aware of the educational requirements of the passport country or destination for the child's further study or vocational training.
- Preparing for university – some useful links are listed here.
- Transitions – this contains some helpful guidelines on starting at a new school.
- Special needs – some helpful links are listed.
- Family safety – there are sections on keeping your family safe while living cross-culturally and choosing a safe environment for your child. There are also some excellent free downloadable worksheets for use by individual families, with explanations as to how to use them. They are available at this link:

<https://worldfamilyeducation.com/family-safety-worksheets/>

Family Life

Our third recommendation is the material posted online by Timothy L. Sanford at Focus on the Family. It can be accessed here:

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/contributors/timothy-l-sanford-ma-lpc/>

Here are some examples of the areas addressed:

'The real job of dads' and *'The importance of fathers to their daughters'* – these articles are especially relevant for parents where the father is strongly motivated to be busy in ministry, sometimes at the expense of spending time with his wife and children. In the first article Sanford states that a teenager needs as much time and attention as a toddler, and in the second one he includes seven simple steps for dads.

'An attitude of gratitude' – this article includes some helpful practical guidelines for teaching children to be thankful for what they have.

Tim's website also includes an article called *'Do your children understand Easter?'* On this page he has provided a series of five lesson plans to help children understand what Easter is about. The plans can be downloaded and copied for family use.

Gill Bryant