



Seven questions to ask when preparing to go overseas

1. Have we spoken to our children?

Children are significant members of any family. They have feelings and thoughts and can contribute richly to ministry overseas. Children like routine and find uncertainty difficult, and so we suggest that you to talk to your children about the idea of any plans for living overseas. The possibility of moving and living overseas can be explored through play and songs. It is important to help your children by being positive during conversation.

2. Where will 'home' be?

While the family will be overseas for long periods it is advisable to think about where the 'home' base will be. Will there be somewhere for the family to go when on 'home leave'? How does a family ensure that they have passport-country residency to enable the further education of their children? Will there be somewhere for when the family return on a more permanent basis?

3. Who will be our support team?

Families as a whole and individuals need support. Along with the sending church(es), supporters will be needed – people who can commit emotional time and energy.

What do the leaders of my church think? Which supporters will be able to offer peer-to-peer support to parents and to children? Who might be able to offer advice and practical support during home leave or re-entry?

4. What nationality will our children be?

Will children be born in the country of work or back in the passport country? Will the place of birth determine the nationality of the child? When and how is a UK passport



Seven questions to ask

issued for children? Do I need visas for my children? How will nationality affect the further education of the children?

5. How will we educate our children?

Planning children's education is vital. It needs to be planned with longevity in mind – but also with flexibility! Take time to investigate all the educational options available, considering all the advantages and disadvantages. Ask other missionaries about the long-term implications of the various options. Where will the kids be educationally next time the family is back in the passport country?

6. Who will care for our children?

There will be times when children need to be cared for and parents may not be there to provide that. For example, when a child transitions into further education or university, where will they live during the course and when the course pauses for holidays? Who will be able to act as 'parent' for the child to fall back on if they need support? Will the 'parent' be local or within easy access of transport links?

7. What if something happens to us?

Parents need to make plans for substitute carers, should something happen to them. Guardians should be appointed. Does the extended family know about this? Is there financial provision in place for the children? Who has lasting power of attorney to ensure that the plans are recognised legally and avoid possible problems?

Is there anything I can read to help me think things through?

[Focus on The Family](#) is a short article about the joys and challenges of raising a family overseas.

[Third Culture Kids Growing Up Amongst Worlds](#) is specifically about how growing up overseas impacts children and families.

[A Life Overseas](#) blog has a specific section on preparing for going overseas.