



# Supporting Kids & Teens through International Transitions



thriving relocation



# Supporting Kids & Teens in Transitions

Resources for supporting kids, tweens, and teens through the loss and change involved in international transitions

## Kids and teens need our support with transition.

The opportunity of living a global life also means facing unique challenges. Every time we move to a new location, we have to say goodbye to meaningful relationships and places, and start over building a new life in a new place. Kids are going through this just as much as adults, in their own way. As parents, part of our job is to support their transition. This guide will give you the resources to learn how to do so.

If you're living internationally, preparing to relocate, or have a decision to make about your next move, be sure to check out our [free resources](#) and [programs](#).

Warmly,  
Shannon Jones  
Founder, Thriving Relocation

“You will never be completely at home again, because part of your heart always will be elsewhere. That is the price you pay for the richness of loving and knowing people in more than one place.”

~MIRIAM ADENEY

## Are you living an international life?

As a team of professional life coaches specializing in relocation, with personal experience living internationally, we can guide you with effective tools and skilled coaching to help you make tough relocation decisions, prepare for your move with ease, enjoy a smooth start in your new location, and create a life you love once you get there.

We provide individual support and detailed guidebooks in our programs:  
*Confident Decisions, Smooth Transitions, and Path to Thriving.*  
Learn more at [www.thrivingrelocation.com](http://www.thrivingrelocation.com)



Here are our top recommendations and resources for supporting your kids, tweens and teens through the challenges that come with international transitions.

Terminology: "TCK" stands for "Third Culture Kid" and refers to any individual who has lived outside of their parents' passport country for any meaningful length of time during their developmental years.

## *Learn*

It's empowering for parents to learn about the ways that living in multiple countries and cultures affects kids and teens, in order to better understand and support them.

**Read the book** [Raising Up a Generation of Healthy Third Culture Kids](#) Book by Lauren Wells

**Learn the tools** to support your kids in [Global Mobility Trainer's](#) workshops & online courses

**Ask about your situation** in a [Mentoring session with Anna Seidel at Global Mobility Trainer](#)

## *Support with the loss*

Unresolved grief from the losses from previous moves can be a primary factor in why people (adults and children alike) have difficulty adjusting in the new place. These are some tools to grieve the loss in a healthy way.

**Help Kids Say Goodbye.** Help your child have closure in their relationships with special last experiences shared together and a way to say goodbye that is meaningful to them. They can write a letter, draw a picture, give friends a gift such as a photo of the friends together, or make matching friendship bracelets. Ask if there are any experiences they want to have one last time before moving. They can make a photo album or collage of memories, write about what their friends and life meant to them, and make a plan to keep in touch.

**Keep in touch.** Maintaining relationships is an important aspect of identity and mental health. When kids and teens are feeling brand new and perhaps isolated or unconfident in a new place, it can be nice to have the affirmation of feeling known and liked by peers.

**Grief Support.** [TCK Training](#) provides "debriefing" sessions for young people and families to process the losses they have been through and make sense of the changes in their life.

**DIY Grief Support.** Tools to process loss for kids that you can do yourself at home are available in the book [The Grief Tower](#) by Lauren Wells and [free downloadable worksheets](#).

**Ongoing Support.** An individual therapist for the child/teen who can offer a space for them to share their feelings about the place and people they are missing, their feelings about the move, etc. [Contact me](#) for a list of therapists that work internationally.

**Acknowledge feelings.** Acknowledge and validate your child's feelings with compassion, so they know you understand. It's okay to feel sad and grieve losses, and can be unhelpful to jump too quickly to pointing out the positives of the situation.

**Model gratitude.** Though loss is painful, an international life exposes us to amazing experiences, people, and opportunities for growth. Viewing our experiences and opportunities with gratitude is a positive way to integrate big life changes.

**Provide perspective.** Moving to a new place is hard at first, even for adults. With time you will build new connections, establish your life, and feel normal, happy, and settled again.

"You can't be in one place if your heart is somewhere else."

~ ANNA SEIDEL, Global Mobility Trainer



## Support with new connections

These are a few ways that parents can support their kids to connect in their new location.

**Create social opportunities.** Attend and host social events, meet other families before starting school, get together with other new families, and reach out to get to know other parents. Include other kids in your family events such as going out to pizza or weekend activities.

**Your child's happy place.** Make the effort to find extracurricular activities your child enjoys and can thrive in, such as a sport, music, art, baking, etc. Find places they really want to be, where they feel happy, having something in common with the other youth, and can build confidence.

**School environment.** If possible, choose a school that actively helps new students to integrate and that provides social-emotional support for all students, to create a more inclusive community. At minimum, connect with the school so they can help facilitate social connections, help your child integrate, and keep an eye on their progress.

## For youth

What youth can do themselves to have a smoother transition.

**Connect with other cross-cultural kids.** Youth who have also lived in other countries, or any family with at least one parent who is from another culture (even if this child hasn't lived abroad themselves). Look for peers locally who fall in this category and reach out to them.

**Learn what a TCK is.** Youth can gain greater self-understanding and coping tools by learning about being a "TCK". [Kaleidoscope](#) works directly with kids and has a "club" for youth to get support in their identity living outside their passport culture, and other community building opportunities. It starts with "TCK 101" and then there are topic based clubs to join next.

**Gain a mentor.** Youth can [chat with Anna Seidel at Global Mobility Trainer](#). She is a TCK herself, and now a mom of TCKs, and very relatable and easy to talk to. Or, find a trusted adult to talk with in your own life such as an aunt/uncle, teacher, neighbor, or coach.

**For Teens.** [Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens: 100 Practical Ideas](#) A book for teens with simple ideas for understanding and expressing grief (can be applied to losses from moving).

## Additional Resources

### Podcasts

[Grief and Guilt Raising TCKs with Ruth Van Reken](#) - Podcast interview about the difference between comfort and encouragement, and how parents can support kids with their grief.

[Unresolved Grief](#) - The effects of moving and loss, tips about listening to childrens' feelings.

### Books

[Raising Up a Generation of Healthy Third Culture Kids](#) Book by Lauren Wells

[The Grief Tower](#) by Lauren Wells

[Third Culture Kids: A Gift to Care For](#) by Ulrika Ernvik

[Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds](#) by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken