

ALLIANCEWOMEN

Third Culture Kids Adoption Program



Ideas, Suggestions and Guidelines
for Local Church Participation

Guidelines for Districts

One of the continuing ministries of Alliance Women (AW) through the districts of the Christian and Missionary Alliance is the “adoption” of our **Third Culture Kids (TCKs)**. It is our privilege to partner with Alliance international workers (IW's) by expressing love and care for their children.

To keep some uniformity, the following guidelines are offered.

1. Every district is encouraged to appoint a TCK Coordinator. It is the responsibility of this person to communicate on a regular basis with district IW families and adoptive churches.
2. The district TCK Coordinator will send a copy of this document, “Ideas, Suggestions and Guidelines,” to all participating churches.
3. The district TCK Coordinator will write an annual report of the district's adopted TCKs (including name, birthday, parents, country/region and adopting church). Any unassigned TCKs should also be included in the report. This report shall be given to the AW district director who will include it in her annual report to District Conference. It is suggested that this report also be sent to the district Missions Mobilizer (DMM).
4. The district TCK Coordinator is encouraged to send an annual evaluation survey to IW families who have children in the program, using the result to improve the district program. As a courtesy, the district TCK Coordinator is encouraged to share these results with the Alliance Women national director.
5. The district TCK Coordinator should regularly communicate with the district office and/or DMM for updated information about IW appointees so that ministry to these families may be started early in the process.
6. It is suggested that the AW district leadership team use events such as retreats and District Conference to promote the TCK Adoption Program. A seminar on “How to Minister to TCKs” at could be offered at these events.
7. TCKs are eligible to remain in the adoption program until the age of 21 or completion of college.

Suggestions for the Local Church

APPOINT a local TCK Coordinator or team. This person or team may be from different ministry groups in the church—women’s ministry, children’s ministry, youth ministry, missions committee, etc. The local TCK Coordinator or team will maintain records of participation (see Information to Organize and Maintain).

PRAY (see Praying for Your TCK) Share this important ministry with the entire church family. Keep informed.

COMMUNICATE with your TCK(s) and family. Frequent letters, cards and emails will let them know they are important. Encourage children and youth in the church to be “pen pals” through snail mail or email. This gives your TCK(s) a sense of connection and friendship with the other kids. Keep praying and writing *even if* your TCK is not the best at responding!

SEND GIFTS (see Gift Giving) If sending packages, plan ahead and mail early. Mark your calendar 3-4 months in advance for promoting the gift-giving occasion, receiving donations from your church family and mailing.

INVITE your TCK(s) and family to your church when they are on Home Assignment. Be creative and have an “UnBirthday” Party or “Christmas in July” celebration or a similar event to celebrate your TCK(s)! If there are other children in the family attending whom you have not officially “adopted,” remember gifts for them as well. Host a weekend event in their honor, perhaps with a celebration Friday night with the youth and a lunch for the entire family on Saturday. Give them the opportunity to minister in Sunday school and church. Extend an open invitation to the church and spread the blessing of the occasion!

SUPPORT your TCK(s) financially and practically. Help send your TCK(s) to events like summer camp, retreats and LIFE. Provide a home or place for your TCK(s) to stay during vacations and school breaks while in college when their parents are overseas.

BE FAITHFUL and continue the adoption as long as possible. (See Adoption Guidelines for TCK eligibility) If you are no longer able to fulfill your TCK adoption responsibilities, contact the district TCK Coordinator as soon as possible. Our goal is to have your TCK(s) quickly reassigned. Often there are churches on a waiting list for adoption. As a courtesy, notify the TCK’s parents of the need for change.

****If you are going to adopt a TCK, please take the responsibility seriously. Do not start a relationship like this with a child, no matter the age, and then be neglectful. The adoption relationship can be a very positive experience or very hurtful. Do not become involved and then break the promise of caring.****

-sentiments of a TCK’s mother

Record Keeping

Organizing and maintaining information relating to your local church TCK Adoption Program will prove to be very beneficial. Keeping records will facilitate communication with your TCK(s) and local church family.

Information to keep on record:

➤ **PERSONAL**

- Your TCK's contact information and any other helpful information (likes, dislikes, interests, hobbies, clothing sizes, etc.)

➤ **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Letters, notes and e-mails received from your TCK or his/her parents. Make note of the date received.

➤ **PRAYER JOURNAL**

- A record of prayer requests and answers. This will be an encouragement to your TCK as well as your church family!

➤ **PHOTO ALBUM/SCRAPBOOK**

- Collect pictures of your TCK, pictures or articles found in *Alliance Life*, and memorabilia from events hosted at your local church when the family is on home assignment. This can be given to your TCK as a special gift.

➤ **GIFTS**

- A record of gifts sent to your TCK, cost/value of the gifts and postage/shipping costs. This helps to avoid duplication.

➤ **TCK ADOPTION PROGRAM HANDBOOK & FORMS**

Gift Giving Guidelines and Suggestions

Sending a gift to your adopted TCK blesses you and the family!

What do you send your TCK? Think of the kids and teens in your church that may be the same age as your TCK. What things are they interested in or excited about?

The cost of gifts should not exceed the recommended limit in your district. Annual expenditures of \$50-\$100 has been the standard.

Advise parents or house parents when a gift is sent to your TCK so that they will be alert for a package and ask them to acknowledge its receipt.

Some ideas to consider:

Birthdays If your TCK is at boarding school, there will be other students around. Perhaps you could provide the makings for a special birthday party! Send napkins, birthday tablecloth, balloons, gum, candy, etc., and of course, a gift for the birthday boy/girl!

School Send a “back-to-school” package to your TCK to prepare for the new school year.

Christmas Your TCK will be at home with his/her family. In addition to a gift for your TCK, you may want to send a gift for the whole family to enjoy. You could send decorations and other items.

Valentine’s Remind your TCK that you love him/her! Send an email or card or a package with heart-shaped candies. You could send your TCK a box of valentines to share with classmates or send to parents.

Easter Send an email or card or a package with small Easter candies, such as Peeps or Jelly Bellies.

Graduation This is a very special time for a teen. Send words of encouragement through an email or card. Send a gift. If you know your TCK is going to college, send something that will be useful at college.

ANY DAY Pick any day at random to send an email, card or gift to let your TCK know you care about him/her!

Praying for Your TCK

Pray for your TCK(s) as you would for other children.

TCKs need friends, encouragement, and, most of all, the experience of salvation and a meaningful, growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Here are some specific ways you can pray for them:

- Salvation and spiritual growth
- A teachable spirit
- Proper respect for authority
- Good friendships
- Swift adjustment to the culture and a love for their adopted country
- Grace for transitions and goodbyes
- Adjustment to school (boarding, international, home school)
- Healthy, open relationship with parents
- Good relationship with dorm parents, for those that go to boarding school
- Safety in travel
- Spiritual protection
- Wisdom
- Learn to be more dependent on God, while also developing a healthy independence and confidence
- Learn how to resolve conflicts with others
- Future plans, such as college or a spouse
- Always seek God and His Kingdom first

TCK Information Form

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.

May the Lord bless your family as you serve Him! We are grateful to know how we can best pray for and encourage your child.

Date:

TCK Parent Information

Names:

Country/Region:

Email Address:

Adopted TCK Information

Name(s) and birthdate(s):

Email address (if different from parents):

Hobbies and interests:

Are there items you would advise us NOT to send?

What is the best way for your child to receive **packages**?
(Are there weight limits, duty charges, packaging or postal regulations we should be aware of?)

What is the best way for us to send **money**?

Specific prayer requests:

Return this form to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____