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Special Needs

OFFICE OF OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

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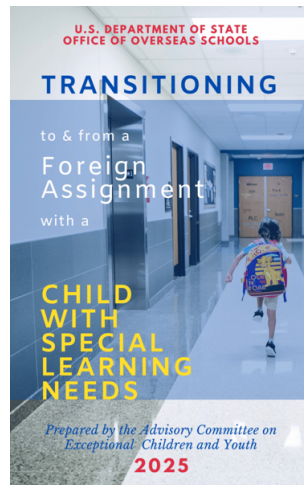
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Special Needs Guide



Every year, hundreds of U.S. families with special-needs children have to make career-related decisions about whether to go overseas and if so, where. The brochure

[2025 Transitioning to and from a Foreign Assignment with a Child with Special Learning Needs](#) [22 MB]

is designed to help families think through such decisions and to facilitate their children's transition to the most appropriate school setting possible. Families will find additional information in [and](#) [below](#). Hard copies are available by e-mailing [.](#)

The booklet was developed by the Office of Overseas Schools and its [Advisory Committee on Exceptional Children and Youth](#), whose support, guidance and wisdom has helped increase services to children with special needs in international schools. It was developed in close collaboration with the [Office of Allowances, Child and Family Programs](#), and the [Global Community Liaison Office](#).

More guidance can be found in terms of the [clearance process and allowance can be found here](#).

Special Needs Profiles

Each school has provided information to help you understand the levels of

support offered. These are known as [Special Needs Profiles](#). Many schools have the ability to support at least some students with mild special learning needs. Additionally, at the bottom of each [Fact Sheet](#) you can download an individual school profile. Please check directly with the listed REO and the school for details on their programs.

Special Educational Needs Levels of Service Definitions 2024-2025

To support a common language within the assisted school [Special Needs Profiles](#), the Office of Overseas Schools endeavored to define the basic terms “Mild, Moderate, and More Intensive.” These definitions were developed by the Office of Overseas Schools and its [Advisory Committee on Exceptional Children and Youth](#), whose support, guidance and wisdom help standardize approaches and the cultural discussion around building and maintaining learning support programs in overseas schools.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT- OVERVIEW	CHARACTERISTICS	TYPICAL RANGE OF SERVICES
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MILD</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minimal Services</p> <p>School provided services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Few common classroom accommodations AND/OR ▪ Some learning support services OR ▪ Some additional services (e.g., Counseling, Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech and Language Therapy (SLT), Physical Therapy (PT), etc.) 	<p>School provides services for students able to learn the grade level curriculum with minimal classroom accommodations. Students who make expected academic progress, generally a year's growth in a year's time.</p> <p>For students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where formal/informal assessment data indicate student is performing 6 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning support services 3-5 times per week in one or two core subject areas, AND/OR 2. Some small group intervention (push in, co-taught, pull out), AND/OR 3. A range of accommodations according to a 504 or Accommodation Plan, AND/OR 4. Additional support services include Counseling, OT, SLT, and PT

months to 1 year below grade expectations in 1 to 2 core subject areas, AND

- Who can make academic progress in whole class setting.

MODERATE

Moderate Services

School provided services include:

- Some common classroom accommodations AND
- Some curricular modifications AND
- Learning support services AND/OR
- Additional support services (e.g., Counseling, OT, SLT, PT, ABA (Autism/ADHD) Therapy, etc.)

School provides services for students who make progress toward the grade level curriculum with classroom accommodations and/or minimal modifications. Students make some academic progress, but less than a year's growth in a year's time.

For students:

- Where formal/informal assessment data indicate student is performing 1 to 2 years below grade expectations in 1 or more core subject areas, AND/OR
- Who can make academic progress in whole class setting, AND/OR
- Who exhibit characteristics of learning, social-emotional and/or behavioral that contribute to difficulty

1. Learning support services daily in 2 or more core subject areas, AND
2. Small group AND individual intervention (e.g., push in, co-taught, pull out, some 1:1 support) AND
3. A range of accommodations according to a 504 or Accommodation Plan, AND/OR
4. Additional support services for moderately functioning students (e.g., Counseling, OT, SLT, PT, ABA Therapy etc.)

functioning within grade expectations, including but not limited to mental health and attention deficit conditions, and autistic behaviors.

MORE INTENSIVE

Intensive Services

School provided services include ALL of the following:

- Many classroom accommodations AND
- Modified curriculum AND
- Learning support services AND
- Additional support services (e.g., Counseling, OT, SLT, PT, ABA (Autism/ADHD) Therapy, etc.)

School provides services for students who are unable to meet grade level expectations. Students require a modified curriculum.

For students:

- Where formal/informal assessment data indicate student is performing 2 years or more below grade level standards across all core subject areas, AND/OR
- With below average intelligence as indicated on a current norm-referenced standardized cognitive assessment, AND/OR
- Who exhibit characteristics of learning, social-emotional and/or behavioral that contribute to difficulty functioning within grade expectations,

1. Long-term specially designed pull-out instructional program, which may include a self-contained program, AND
2. Individual (e.g., 1:1 paraprofessional/aide) and small group instruction, AND/OR
3. A range of support services include Counseling, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, ABA (Autism/ADHD) Therapy, etc.

including but not limited to mental health and attention deficit conditions, and autistic behaviors.

NOTES: Services described here may be provided by the school, by community providers, or by online providers where appropriate.

These categories do not apply to students whose only academic needs are due to cultural and/or linguistic differences (i.e., students who are learning English as an additional language).

Special Needs Webinars

[Special Education Needs Overseas Seminar](#) , this webinar was created to specifically meet the needs of FS families that need to understand and navigate Department of State services available overseas to children with special needs. This session was recorded in April of 2021.

To find out about future sessions please reach out to the Foreign Service Institute's (FSI) Transition Center at FSITCTraining@state.gov or see [Transition Center Courses and Webinars by Date](#).

Resources within the Department of State

[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.

HR Bureau Webinars on Special Needs Education Allowance. 1) [Special Needs Education Allowance](#) (SNEA) 2) [Special Needs Education Allowance Q&A](#) 3) [Special Needs Education Allowance 2nd Q&A](#)

[Global Community Liaison Office](#), Education and Youth. This site contains a variety of information specifically related to educating the Foreign Service

child, including gifted education, homeschooling, special educational needs, relocation, and third culture kids.

[GCLC Special Needs FAQ](#)

[Information on the role of MED's Child and Family Program](#) and questions and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

General Learning Support Information

[U.S. Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)

[National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities](#)

[Woodbine House](#) – 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.

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

[SchwabLearning](#) – Non-profit foundation that funds programs in learning differences and human services. Site addresses children with identified learning disabilities (LD), ADHD, and those who struggle with learning.

[American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)

[Learning Disabilities Association of America](#)

[National Association of School Psychologists](#)

[Council for Learning Disabilities](#)

[LD Online](#) – A parent resource with numerous articles and links to more information on disabilities and parent support groups.

[Understood](#) – A website designed for parents and teachers of children with learning and attentional difficulties, with resources ranging from newsletters to teaching strategies.

[Iris Center](#) – A resource on effective evidence-based practices and interventions for all children, especially those with learning difficulties provided by Vanderbilt University.

[Innovation | Center on Teaching and Learning \(uoregon.edu\)](#)

Specific Learning Disability Resources

[International Dyslexia Association](#)

[Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(CHADD\)](#)

Gaulin, Cindy (2000). *Children's Language Processing Problems: A Guide for Parents and Teachers*. Xlibris Corporation.

Twice-Exceptional-2e Gifted Resources

[2eNewsletter](#) – A monthly e-newspaper for parents providing advice and resources for children who are twice exceptional.

[Hoagies Gifted](#) – Huge website providing resources for parents of twice exceptional children.

[Davidson Institute](#) – Several articles for parents, providing tips for meeting the needs of children who are twice exceptional.

Trail, B. A. (2011). *Twice exceptional gifted children: Understanding, teaching, and counseling gifted students*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. This book is a very practical book for teachers and parents about how to help twice-exceptional children set goals and get the education they need in today's schools.

Webb, Amend, et al. (2005). *Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults: ADHD, Bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, Depression, and Other Disorders*. Scottsdale. Great Potential Press. Too often our brightest kids are misunderstood because of their behavior. It seems that some educators and clinicians are too quick to label these kids ADHD or Asperger's or OCD. Webb and his colleagues help us realize that, in fact, they could just be showing quite normal signs of their giftedness.

Weinfeld, R., Barnes-Robinson, L., Jeweler, S., & Shevita, B. R. (2006). *Smart kids with learning difficulties: Overcoming obstacles and realizing potential*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press. This book excels at suggesting teaching activities and parental strategies that help twice-exceptional children deal with their asynchronies.

Dyslexia

Hall, S. L., & Moats, L.C. (1999) *Straight Talk About Reading: How Parents Can Make a Difference in the Early Years*. Contemporary Books.

Moats, L.C., & Dakin, K. (2007). *Basic Facts about Dyslexia and Other Reading Problems*. International Dyslexia Association.

Shaywitz, S., (2003). *Overcoming Dyslexia: A new and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at Any Level*, Borzoi, New York. 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.

Learning Disability Resources

Bell, Debra. (2005). *The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling*. Nashville, Tennessee. Tommy Nelson, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc. ISBN-10: 1400305667. ISBN-13: 978-1400305667. Wonderful resource for homeschooling children for both the beginner and the family who has homeschooled for years. Numerous web links, insights on curriculums, and covers all ages/grade levels. This book has an entire chapter on homeschooling special needs children but the entire book can be applied to teaching the special needs student.

Hensley, Sharon. (1997). *Home Schooling Children with Special Needs*. Noble Publishing Associates. ISBN-10: 1568570244. ISBN-13: 978-1568570242. Home schooling mild to more severe learning disabled children. Resources and curriculum options for varying learning styles and unique issues special needs children have.

Children's Temperament

Carey, William B. with Jablow, Martha M. (1998). *Understanding Your Child's Temperament*. New York: Simon & Schuster MacMillan. pp.1- 228. 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 (2005). *The Temperament Perspective. Working with Children's Behavioral Styles*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul Brookes. pp. 1-420. 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 (1998). *Raising Your Spirited Child*. New York: Harper Collins. pp. 1-302. Practical suggestions and strategies for parents when interacting with a high 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 about Living Abroad

These do not deal with children with special needs but may help you anticipate some of the complexities you will be facing as you prepare for the international move and in raising 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. 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. 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 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. 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 a 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 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, 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.

Resources about Returning Home

These do not deal with children with special needs but may help you

anticipate some of the complexities you will be facing as you prepare for the international move and in raising children in the overseas environment.

Copeland, Anne (Ph.D.) and Bennett, Georgia, *Understanding American Schools: The Answers to Newcomers Most Frequently Asked Question*, The Interchange Institute, Brookline, Massachusetts, 2001. 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, *Bouncing Back*. Global Community Liaison Office, Department of State, Washington, D.C., 2013. This book addresses the challenges faced by children returning “home” from another country and discusses their transitional and reentry needs.

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.

Curriculum Materials and Resources for Home and School Enrichment for 2e Learners

Michael Clay Thompson Language Arts Program (Royal Fireworks Press). There are 6 language arts strands (Vocabulary, Grammar, Literary Analysis, Academic Writing, Practice, and Poetics with separate materials for grades 1 –12. This program has also been written for on-line learning with strong pedagogical formatting.

College of William and Mary Jacob’s Ladder series (Kendall Hunt/Prufrock Press). This program advanced reading comprehension with 16 different comprehension skills, applied on a series of short readings in all literary genre. Many activities are suggested for teaching these skills.

Beast Academy (Art of Problem Solving Foundation). These materials come in four booklets over the course of each grade from grade 1 -6. The graphic use of different beasts to teach extended mathematics is

highly accessible to gifted as well as twice exceptional learners. There are multiple levels of extension for the skills taught, so all learners well beyond their current grade level math outcomes can benefit. The foundation also has materials that prepare learners for math competitions, including the math Olympics, and takes students more deeply into math for the middle school and high schools years than regular math texts do.

Additional units of instruction for gifted learners can be found in Prufrock Press and Royal Fireworks Press. The College of William and Mary math, science, social studies, and language arts (Prufrock Press) are extraordinary as are the Problem-Based science and math units at Royal Fireworks Press.

For reluctant writers, a good motivational text is Unjournaling, a small book with hundreds of writing starters, such as write a paragraph without using the letter "t" or the word, "and".

Regional Education Officers (REOs) Contact

School situations can change quickly, particularly as schools face cutbacks to learning support programs due to the pandemic, unrest, and economic uncertainty. For the most current information, work with the REO and school. The website information is intended as a jumping off point for a conversation with the REO and school to understand the best fit for your child. Definitions may vary school to school.

For information about overseas schools, you are encouraged to contact any of the following REOs via OverseasSchools@state.gov. Expertise related questions will be directed to the appropriate REO and the Overseas Schools Team will endeavor to respond within one business day.

Africa

Dr. Bobbi R. McDaniel

East Asia Pacific

Mr. Andrew A. Hoover

Eastern Europe, Central Asia

Mr. Eben W. Plese

**Near East, South Asia, Cyprus,
Greece, Türkiye**

Mr. Mike Emborsky

**Caribbean, Mexico, Central
America, South America**

Ms. Tara S. Waudby

Western Europe

Dr. Tim S. Stuart

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