



Learning in England ∞ TCK and CCK

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You may have heard the expression third culture kid, a TCK, or cross-cultural kid, CCK.

What is a TCK or CCK?

The boy or girl will be a TCK, a Third Culture Kid, if parents are living in another country, from their passport identity. We could ask “is his own identity closest to his father’s national identity, or his mother’s identity...or is his identity closest to his peers at school?”

- The first cultures will be the passport cultures;
- the second culture will be of the country where the parents and child live;
- and the third culture will be the identity the child forms for him or herself.

The CCK or Cross-Cultural Kid is a child who accompanies his or her parents, all sharing the same passport nationality, into another culture and may also ask questions about identity and belonging.

“I am quite worried about our upcoming move to Australia. I am from South Africa, and my husband is from Italy. We speak English and Italian at our home, in England. Our daughter has been at school here for three years. She is 14. You may think the UK and Australia are similar because both countries speak English, and play cricket, but culturally they are very different.”¹

With globalisation and the ease of travel, there is great scope for living and working in different parts of the world. This is very exciting... probably young children adapt readily to the place where they live and go to school, but for older children and young adults it can be quite stressful. They are trying to work out their own identity and where they belong or fit, without the stable markers that their peers have. Sometimes it is parents who find it hard to adapt to their children as TCKs. There is anxiety in sending them to boarding school in another

¹ Nadia, South African mother moving to Australia



country, but greater anxiety when the children go back to their parents abroad, “home,” for the school holidays.

At Paths to Learning we help children and their parents on their life journey, to understand the differences between cultures and what is important in different places. We hope the experience of being a supported TCK or CCK who has learned what gives him or her a secure identity helps him or her to fit in different cultural contexts, and to be well equipped to work with empathy, all over the world.

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How do you help parents and children to understand differences in culture and what to expect in the UK?

A

If you would like our support, we will offer bespoke Cultural-Orientation **before** your child starts at boarding school in the UK. The course for your family, and if you like with other families, will run for a day, and address what is normally acceptable or unacceptable in English culture, in terms of common courtesies in dress, personal hygiene, greetings, symbols and ways of expressing themselves. We will look at topics and vocabulary that are being discussed in the Media and among the children’s peers; consider what makes English people laugh; and why English people talk about the weather, food and sport. We will help parents to understand acceptable and unacceptable ways of supporting their children in English culture.

It is not our intention to familiarise you with the matters each school will raise in its own induction programme, but to complement what is offered by the schools, to give you a more general view.

We are planning to run a Cultural-Orientation Summer School in the last week of August each year, for parents and their children, which will include an opportunity to celebrate your own culture and be a means to gaining insight into the culture of the English. Watch this space!