

# *Direct Communication Project*

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Paper Number 24

## Education Options for FS Family Members

### Preface

*"Education is not something to prepare you for life; it is a continuous part of life."*

**Henry Ford**

Foreign Service life is an education. For employees and family members our science lab might be the beaches of Oman watching giant turtles lay their eggs. Our history classroom might be the streets of Berlin watching the Wall come down. We practice our math facts by converting dollars to an exotic currency. Civics lessons are learned during dinner table discussions comparing the host country government to the U.S. government. We step out our door and enter an enormous language lab.

Meeting the requirements of traditional schools or arranging the logistics of child care may be more complicated for us. *Education Options for Foreign Service Family Members* is intended to provide us with the information necessary to make good decisions for our children and ourselves. It puts each stage from infant care to adult education into the Foreign Service context.

The production of this book spans the tenure of four Education Counselors in the Family Liaison Office (FLO). Special thanks to Judith Livingston and Maryann Minutillo for the work they did creating *Educating the Foreign Service Child at Home and Abroad*, the collection of papers on which *Education Options for Foreign Service Family Members* is based. Kay Branaman Eakin, with typing and research assistance from Sylvia Hooper and Giselle Conway, revised the material and updated the information on regulations during her tenure as Education Counselor. Current Education and Youth Counselor Sydnee Tyson continued updating and revising. FLO Deputy Director Gail Watson Knowles wrote the transition passages which changed the collection of papers into a unified book.

Our friends at the Association of American Foreign Service Women, Employee Consultation Service, Office of Allowances, Office of Overseas Schools, and the Overseas Briefing Center reviewed it and offered suggestions.

Thank you to each person who contributed to this book and good luck to each person who uses it to get the best education possible to supplement their Foreign Service experience.

Kendall Montgomery  
Director, Family Liaison Office

Karen Hansen Lundahl  
Publications Coordinator

# EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILY MEMBERS

## INTRODUCTION: USING THIS BOOK

*One of the benefits of choosing a Foreign Service lifestyle is the opportunity to expose our children to other cultures. At the same time, it is important to us as parents to be able to provide our children with the best possible formal education. Because of the moves and varying strengths and types of schools, we may have to take a more active role in planning our children's education. This book explores the resources that are available to help us do this. It provides vital information on the special challenges we face educating our Foreign Service children. It also can be used as a tool to plan for those important events that occur during a student's progression from nursery school through college.*

*Unlike our friends who do not move around the world, we will sometimes have an overwhelming number of options to choose from. Some of us will want our children to be educated in an American-style curriculum. To others, developing foreign language skills is an important reason for choosing a non-English speaking school system. Some of us will have children with special needs, either gifted and talented, learning disabled, or physically challenged. As our children become teenagers, opportunities to participate in sports and the arts become important factors in choosing a school. Sometimes career demands will require us to consider boarding school options. This book gives us the background information we need to plan our children's education.*

*While the emphasis is on schools and school-age children, this book looks at Foreign Service family members of all ages. There is information on the day care needs of Foreign Service babies and early childhood education for preschoolers. At the other end of the spectrum, it looks at adult education options for Foreign Service spouses and young adult family members who are not in college. It is organized in general chronological order with the information on related topics interspersed throughout age level material. This book is designed for those people who want information on a specific topic as well as for those people who want to use it as a planning tool to look at the total picture of education for Foreign Service families.*

## Chapter 1

### THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILIES

*Fortunately, when we need help, there are many resources available to Foreign Service families. One of these is the Education and Youth Officer in the Family Liaison Office (FLO). To help families work through the maze of choices, the Education and Youth Officer provides information to individual families and to overseas communities through the Community Liaison Office at post.*

*The Education and Youth Officer also: organizes programs on education topics, including parenting seminars; is the Department's liaison with boarding schools used by Foreign Service families; and stays current on educational issues by visiting schools, meeting with educational consultants, and participating in international education conferences. Families can also turn to the Education and Youth Officer for guidance about the effects of mobility on children.*

*The Family Liaison Office works closely with four other Department of State offices that are concerned with education for Foreign Service children: Office of Overseas Schools, Employee Consultation Service, Office of Allowances, and Overseas Briefing Center. Use of this book and the resources provided by the Department can increase our knowledge and help us to make good decisions about education for ourselves and our children.*

#### **RESOURCES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

The five Department of State offices that serve as resources for education questions and issues are:

##### **Family Liaison Office (M/DGP/FLO)**

Room 1212 A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520-7512  
Telephone: 202-647-1076  
Fax: 202-647-1670

The Family Liaison Office provides information and counsel on the following topics:

- Washington area public and private schools
- U.S. and international boarding schools
- Schools at posts overseas
- The college admissions process

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

- Financial aid
- Correspondence courses (K-adult)
- Standardized educational testing
- Programs for children with special educational needs
- Summer school and camp programs
- Reentry support for Foreign Service teens

**Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS)**

Room 245, SA-29  
 Department of State  
 Washington, DC 20522-2902  
 Telephone: 703-875-7800  
 Fax: 703-875-7979

The Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) has six regional education officers who are available by appointment to discuss schools at specific posts.

The A/OS media resource center contains detailed information on more than 700 schools attended by U.S. Government family members at posts around the world. Course offerings, special programs, extracurricular activities, and graduation requirements have been compiled from Summary School Information forms updated annually at every overseas post. The information is contained on microfiche, with an accompanying index, and is available at all Embassies and Consulates and at all foreign affairs agencies. Individual school information is available in hard copy from A/OS. The media resource center also contains supplementary information such as yearbooks, school newsletters, and school profiles. Some overseas schools have produced videotapes that are available for screening at the center. In addition, A/OS annually publishes brief fact sheets on each State Department assisted school abroad. The fact sheets are distributed to all posts and all foreign affairs agencies and may be requested by individuals.

**Employee Consultation Service (M/MED/ECS)**

Room 3243  
 Department of State  
 Washington, DC 20520-2256  
 Telephone: 202-647-4929  
 Fax: 202-736-4658

The Employee Consultation Service (ECS) offers information and assistance to Foreign Affairs agency employees and their families who obtain medical clearances through the Office of Medical Services and whose school-aged children have special educational needs (physical or mental handicaps, developmental delay, learning disabilities, or emotional disabilities). The counselors on the staff are licensed clinical social workers. The ECS staff

Family Liaison Office  
 Room 1212A  
 Department of State  
 Washington, DC 20520

assists families by arranging for psycho-educational, speech/language, psychiatric, and other special needs evaluations. They also assist with school placement of children with special needs. Other services include counseling and referral. Appointments should be scheduled in advance from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Office of Allowances (A/OPR/ALS)**

Room 262, SA-29  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20522-2902  
Telephone: 703-875-7906  
Fax: 703-875-7899

The education allowance specialist answers questions pertaining to schooling allowances, special education and supplemental education allowances, and eligibility requirements. Hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. A telephone call, rather than an interview, is usually all that is required to obtain the facts.

**Overseas Briefing Center (M/FSI/OBC)**

E2126, SA-42  
National Foreign Affairs Training Center  
4000 Arlington Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22204-1500  
Telephone: 703-302-7276  
Fax: 703-302-7452

The Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) keeps open files on all overseas missions. Included in these files are school handbooks and profiles, newsletters, yearbooks, personal comments, and Embassy publications on schooling at post. OBC has slides or videotapes on overseas posts that may show the schools most commonly used by Foreign Service families. They also have some videotapes produced by individual schools. The A/OS Microfiche Summary School Information and the school fact sheets are also available at OBC. The Center is open daily from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. plus scheduled evenings and Saturdays. No appointment is necessary.

Teenagers are encouraged to attend the regular *Security Overseas Seminar* (SOS) sessions. During the summer, teenagers and children over the age of 6, can attend the SOS half-day segments designed specifically for elementary and high school students and their parents.

Family members may register for these courses by calling the OBC with their name, the name of their sponsor's agency, and their own and their sponsor's social security numbers.

## **RESOURCES OVERSEAS**

In most Embassies and consulates abroad, at least one of the following resources will be available for information and assistance on educational questions.

### **Community Liaison Office (CLO)**

Approximately 150 overseas posts have a Community Liaison Office that contains useful information about local schools, special education, correspondence courses, Washington area schools, boarding schools, and college admissions/financial aid. These files are supplemented by materials from the Family Liaison Office several times a year.

### **Guidance Counselors at the Schools**

American-curriculum schools overseas normally have guidance counselors who administer the school's testing program, counsel families on educational issues, and advise on college admissions and career options.

### **The United States Information Service (USIS) College Advising Office.**

USIS maintains an Educational Advising Center at many posts. These centers are designed to assist host-country nationals wishing to study in the United States and usually contain college catalogs and other reference materials. Foreign Service families may be able to use these resources if the information is not available elsewhere in the community.

### **Fulbright Exchange Offices**

In some countries a binational office supports the Fulbright exchange program of USIA. Many offices have United States college catalog collections and some have advisers. Consult with USIS to learn if Foreign Service family members may use their information services.

## **Chapter 2 WHO IS THE FOREIGN SERVICE CHILD?**

*In order to make the best educational choices for our children, it is important to understand the effects of a mobile lifestyle on them. David Pollock, a leading expert on the effects of international mobility on adolescents, notes that young people who spend a significant length of time out of their own culture develop a culture of their own. The new culture is made up of what they bring from their home (or their parents' home) culture intermingled with those cultural cues and experiences from the other cultures in which they have lived. Sociologist Ruth Hill Useem uses the term Third Culture Kid (TCK) to describe these young people. All who live abroad are changed by the experience. However, the impact on young people is longer-lasting. As child psychiatrist Jack Smith said, "The Foreign Service is what adults do. It is what our children are."*

### **THE THIRD CULTURE KID**

Growing up outside the United States, a Foreign Service child can develop both positive and negative characteristics which can influence his/her their education. Positive characteristics include linguistic ability, cross-cultural skills, a three-dimensional world view, and increased maturity. Unfortunately, TCKs also may experience rootlessness, insecurity, and unresolved grief or sadness caused by the frequent breaking-off of relationships. While education may be enhanced by international experiences, its continuity is often interrupted as students move from one school system to another, sometimes several times in their pre-college years. TCKs may not be in the same developmental stage as their peers in the United States; delayed adolescence during their early twenties is a common phenomenon. They may feel more camaraderie and comfort with each other or with other foreign nationals who have also grown up in a cross-cultural environment than they do with their American peers. Perhaps there is no time that they feel it more strongly than when they return to the United States after an overseas posting. Claiming identity as Americans overseas, they can feel confused or challenged by the actual America they return to with their parents.

### **ADJUSTMENT TO OVERSEAS**

The adjustment to life overseas is not without difficulties for young people. The Foreign Service family needs to plan carefully, set realistic expectations for all family members, and be ready to identify and handle problems as they happen. Keeping that in mind, children and adolescents often adjust quickly and easily to life overseas. This varies from post to post, but often the overseas community is smaller and more welcoming. Even at large posts, other children have been "the new kid" themselves, so go out of their way to help newcomers. The school may be smaller and the student-teacher ratio better than in the school

back home, allowing for more individual attention. Parents may be happier in their work and have more flexibility to schedule time with the family.

The new culture itself may offer a challenge that is filled with exciting opportunities to explore and learn. Preparing for the move by talking to other people who have lived at the post and reading as much as possible about the culture will help the whole family adjust better. Once at post, discussing feelings and reactions with family members and with other people at post helps facilitate the adjustment. Whether they admit it to their parents or not, Foreign Service children often feel that they are able to experience firsthand what many Americans only read about or see on a special television program.

### ***REENTRY ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS***

Foreign Service families find reentry to American culture to be the most difficult move of all. Major changes occur while one is living abroad, and the more a returnee is aware of those changes, the greater the chance for a smooth transition to life in the United States. The impact on the family may include changes in their financial status and a loss of the Embassy support system. A heavy work schedule and a long commute for the parents may mean less time to spend together as a family.

Many returnees also experience major role changes. Changing roles from official representatives of the U.S. Government to that of ordinary citizens can be unsettling for a family. Many Foreign Service children have not attended large schools or followed an American curriculum. In some cases, a beloved foreign care-giver has been left behind. The "teen scene" may be very different from what the teen experienced overseas. Foreign Service children, with their unique experiences, may find it difficult to fit into groups where "sameness" is valued and there is a lack of curiosity about life overseas. All of these things may impact on a student's performance at school during the first few months. Many parents look for a school that has a faculty that understands these differences, a diverse student body, and a program of studies featuring foreign languages or international subjects.

### ***FLOW OF CARE FOR THIRD CULTURE KIDS***

Parents and community members should work to develop a caring, nurturing environment overseas as a basis for helping TCKs recognize the positive aspects of their lives. Parents can help their children keep in touch with life in the United States by subscribing to magazines and by joining book, record, and video clubs. Students should be encouraged to participate in reentry programs scheduled by Community Liaison Office Coordinators or the school.

When returning to the United States, parents may need to contact teachers and administrators in the new school to help them understand the transition the children will be going through in the first few months, especially if students are coming from a non-American school system. If possible, money should be budgeted for new school clothing so that the

student will "fit in." Returning children should be encouraged to keep in touch with friends at post. Letters, telephone calls, even planned visits will help maintain these friendships. It may be possible to help a child rediscover an old friend from a former post who has also returned to the United States. These renewals are reassuring and provide a form of continuity.

To assist children returning to Washington, the Department of State offers a number of programs and supports Around the World in a Lifetime (AWAL), a group for Foreign Service teens. The Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) and the Family Liaison Office sponsor AWAL activities including the *Away Day*, an exciting outdoor experiential learning course for children 10 to 17 years old, and the *Getaway*, a weekend retreat that examines moving, cross-cultural adaptation, and growing up in the Foreign Service for children 12 to 17 years old. Each fall, the Overseas Briefing Center offers *Transition to Washington for Families*, a series of workshops that include special sessions for teens and younger children. The workshops are led by Foreign Service teenagers and adults who have experienced reentry to Washington.

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF) and the Family Liaison Office have developed the Flow of Care which defines the support available for Foreign Service teens in Washington and overseas. A monthly newsletter published by AWAL members publicizes teen activities in the United States and assists overseas members in keeping in touch with the U.S. scene. Because other AWAL members have had similar experiences, the returning teens feel less alone and they can work through the transition process and come to see the possibilities in the present situation. AWAL programs give recently returned teenagers a chance to talk to each other and to teens who have been living in the United States longer about their feelings and concerns. More information about AWAL and its programs is available at the Family Liaison Office, the Overseas Briefing Center, and the Office of Overseas Schools.

## **RESOURCES**

For the following resources, contact the Community Liaison Office at post or the Family Liaison Office in Washington. See ch 1, p 4 for contact information.

### *America: A Different World*

This is a videotape of 20 Foreign Service teenagers discussing their experiences returning to live in the United States. It is an honest look at the difficulties of reentry, plus practical suggestions for making it better.

### *The Foreign Service Teenager at Home in the U.S.: A Few Thoughts for Parents Returning with Teenagers* by Kay Branaman Eakin

This booklet presents the special issues of reentry for teenagers, offers suggestions for what parents can do to facilitate teen reentry, and contains worksheets to help families do

short-term and long-term planning with their teenagers. It was written as part of the Overseas Briefing Center's Teen Project in 1988.

*Notes from a Traveling Childhood* edited by Karen Curnow McCluskey

This anthology of writings by parents, children, educators, researchers, and mental health professionals is about the effects of international mobility on children and families. It was published in 1994 by the Foreign Service Youth Foundation.

*Wings of AWAL*

This is a monthly newsletter produced by Foreign Service teenagers who are members of Around the World in a Lifetime (AWAL). It contains original art and articles by the teens, plus information on life in Washington, including AWAL activities.

## Flow of Care for Foreign Service Youth

*The following organizations, working in collaboration, have developed a flow of care to help Foreign Service teenagers meet the challenge of a mobile life style: the Family Liaison Office (FLO), the Foreign Service Youth Foundation (FSYF), Around the World in a Lifetime (AWAL), the Overseas Briefing Center (OBC), the Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS), the Employee Consultation Service (ECS), and the Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW). Overseas, programs are developed by the Community Liaison Office (CLO) at post.*

### PREPARATION FOR GOING OVERSEAS

- \* Away Day - outdoor obstacle course promotes leadership and team building skills. AWAL
- \* Going Overseas Workshop - strategies for saying goodbye and reconnecting at new post. OBC
- \* Security Overseas Seminar - for ages six to 18. OBC

### PROGRAMS AT POST

- \* Teen Teleconferences - U.S. panels and overseas groups discuss reentry. FLO
- \* College panel - CLO connects visiting college students to teens at post. CLO
- \* Teen reentry tapes - CLO makes available to community. CLO
- \* Reentry workshops - CLO begins preparation for teens returning to the U.S. CLO

### ON RETURNING TO WASHINGTON

- \* Welcome folders - provides useful information for teens on living in Washington area. AWAL
- \* Foreign Service Family Picnic - summer event offers families networking opportunities. AWAL
- \* Summer fun event - strengthens ties made at picnic. AWAL
- \* Reentry workshop - gives local equivalent of post orientation for teenagers. OBC
- \* Reentry Away Day - promotes leadership and team building skills. AWAL
- \* Getaway - weekend retreat focuses on transition to Washington and American schools. AWAL

### WASHINGTON ACTIVITIES

- \* Getaway reunion - social activity to begin AWAL winter calendar of events. AWAL
- \* Social activities and adventure outings - events between January and June. AWAL
- \* Wings of AWAL - teen newsletter produced at monthly meetings. FLO

## TEEN MONTH

- \* Lectures and workshops - experts advise parents on teen relocation and other parenting issues. FLO
- \* Awards - recognize outstanding volunteer leadership and service to peers. FSYF  
AAFSW  
FLO

## COUNSELING

- \* Education counseling - provides information to students and parents on Washington area, overseas, and boarding schools, as well as on colleges and correspondence courses. FLO  
A/OS
- \* Evaluation and referral services - for young people experiencing unusual difficulties. ECS

### **For further information, contact:**

#### ***AAFSW***

Association of American  
Foreign Service Women  
5125 MacArthur Boulevard NW  
Suite 36  
Washington, DC 20016  
Telephone: 202-362-6514  
Fax: 202-362-6589

#### ***A/OS***

Office of Overseas Schools  
A/OS, Room 245, SA 29  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20522-2902  
Telephone: 703-875-7800  
Fax: 703-875-7979

#### ***AWAL and FSYF***

Around the World in a Lifetime  
Foreign Service Youth Foundation  
AWAL Administrator  
PO Box 39185  
Washington, DC 20016

#### ***CLO***

Community Liaison Office  
Available at over 150 posts

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

***ECS***

Employee Consultation Service  
Department of State, Room 3243  
Washington, DC 20520-22546  
Telephone: 202-647-4929  
Fax: 202-736-4658

***FLO***

Education and Youth Officer  
Family Liaison Office  
Department of State, Room 1212A  
Washington, DC 20520-7512  
Telephone: 202-647-1076  
Fax: 202-647-1670

***OBC***

Assistant SOS Coordinator  
Overseas Briefing Center  
Foreign Service Institute, Room E 2105  
4000 Arlington Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22204-1500  
Telephone: 703-302-7267  
Fax: 703-302-7452

## Chapter 3 COMMON ISSUES AT HOME OR ABROAD

*Before moving on to discussions of education options overseas and those available in the Washington area, this chapter focuses on some common topics that Foreign Service parents would find helpful whether they are living abroad or in the United States. These include: an explanation of the often baffling battery of standardized tests that our American school system administers; a discussion of the important school records that ease our children's transition from one school to another; and some suggestions on ways for parents to become involved in the schools their children may attend.*

### **STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTING**

Because as Foreign Service parents we often need to take an active role in the education of our children, good information on your student's capabilities and potential is vital. Standardized testing is an important tool for parents and school systems to use in measuring a child's academic growth and potential or to uncover learning disabilities. At overseas schools, information on American standardized testing may not always be available. Therefore, we need to be aware of the different sorts of tests commonly administered in U.S. schools. These tests can be a positive element in the instruction and learning of students. However, standardized tests provide only part of the information needed to evaluate a school's effectiveness or to make sound educational decisions for a child.

Two types of standardized tests include required school-based tests, such as the Science Research Association (SRA) achievement series, and admissions and placement tests. In the Washington area, each county or city school system publishes a description of the testing program in that system, as well as the interpretations and uses of particular tests within the system. Parents should contact the school district for that material. See Ch 6, pp 7 - 22 for contact information.

### **SCHOOL-BASED TESTS**

School-based tests can be grouped into three categories: readiness tests, achievement tests, and ability tests.

**Readiness tests**, such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT), measure skills necessary for success in beginning reading and mathematics. Given to kindergarten children in the United States at the end of the school year, the test measures development of skills and abilities that contribute to "readiness" for first grade. This type of test is infrequently used.

**Achievement tests**, such as the Science Research Association tests (SRAs), Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and the Stanford Achievement Tests, test how well students are learning compared with students in other schools across the nation. Given at different grade

levels, these tests measure both what the child has learned and how well s/he can apply that learning to more complex types of thinking.

**Ability or educational aptitude tests**, such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III), Otis Lennon, and Educational Assessment, are indicators of a child's capacity for learning, and are variously administered as group tests or individually, usually by a psychologist.

Standardized test results are an important part of a child's school record, along with teacher observations and results of classroom performance. Before 1974, a child's academic records were carefully guarded by some schools and shielded from review by concerned parents. Now the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act requires schools to notify parents at least once a year of their right to review their child's records whenever they wish.

## **ADMISSIONS AND PLACEMENT TESTS**

Admissions and placement tests are given at testing centers in the United States and abroad on regularly scheduled dates each year. Applicants must register for the tests in advance and pay a fee. The following is a short description of the most important optional tests:

### **The Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT)**

The SSAT is a standardized entrance examination often required by private day and boarding schools. It is considered a useful barometer of general academic ability, reading comprehension, and math skills. The Secondary School Admission Test Board administers the test. Some Foreign Service families have used this test to measure their child's educational level when returning to the United States from abroad.

### **Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)**

The SAT is sometimes called "The College Boards" because it is administered by the College Board and is used as one basis for college admission. The SAT is also used by the Johns Hopkins Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth (CTY) to identify students to participate in special youth programs. See Ch 11, p 11 for more information on CTY programs.

Considerable changes were made to the test in 1994. Now there are two SAT tests. The SAT I is a three-hour test with both verbal and math sections. Each section is scored on the basis of 200 (low) to 800 (high). It is usually taken in the spring of 11th grade and the fall of 12th. It can be repeated; the highest score is the one that counts. Special arrangements for untimed tests can be made for learning-disabled students.

The verbal section of the new SAT I emphasizes critical reading and reasoning with long reading passages followed by questions that measure the student's ability to read at the college-level, making inferences and following the logic of an argument. Other verbal reasoning skills tested include the ability to recognize and to establish relationships between

pairs of words through analogies. Vocabulary knowledge is tested in context based on critical reading passages or independent sentences. The mathematics section tests the student's ability to solve problems using arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. (The test assumes a year of algebra and some geometry.) This section is in three formats: multiple choice, quantitative comparison, and a new section in which students provide their own answers. The College Board publication *Taking the SAT I: Reasoning Tests* describes in detail how the test is organized, timed, scored and the types of questions used. It includes a complete practice test and test-taking tips.

The SAT II Subject Tests replace the previous Achievement Tests. They are a series of mostly multiple-choice one-hour tests measuring achievement in 18 areas. They measure the knowledge of particular subjects and the ability to apply that knowledge. The SAT II: Writing Subject Test replaces the English Composition Test with Essay and the multiple-choice English Composition Test. It consists of a 20-minute essay and 40 minutes of multiple-choice questions.

The subject tests include: writing, literature, American history and social studies, world history, mathematics level I, mathematics level II-C with calculator, German, Spanish, Chinese, modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, biology, chemistry, and physics. Students choose which tests to take. They should be taken as soon as possible after a student has finished a course in that subject. Up to three can be taken on any one testing date, but the SAT I and SAT II may not be taken on the same date. The scoring is on the same 200 to 800 scale as the SAT.

Students taking the SAT II: Writing Test may have the Writing Sample Copy Service send copies of their timed essay to three colleges. In addition, at the time of the initial registration, students may opt for Score Choice which places a hold on the scores until the student has the opportunity to review his/her performance. Most colleges grant credit for superior performance on SAT II tests. Students should inquire about college policy when applying for admission.

Sample tests and testing information are available in the College Board's *Taking the SAT II Subject Tests*. For current guidance on further SAT preparation, contact FLO's Education and Youth Officer.

### **Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)**

The PSAT is a shorter version of the SAT which provides an early measure of verbal and mathematical abilities and is used to identify colleges for which a student may be qualified. The PSAT scores are reported in the range of 20 (low) to 80 (high). Juniors who take the test can enter the competition for the National Merit Scholarship; black students can use it to compete in the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students; and Hispanic students can use it to qualify for scholarships offered by the National Hispanic Scholar Awards Program. The *PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin*, published by the College Board, contains a complete sample test, an answer key, and scoring instructions.

### **American College Testing Program (ACT)**

The ACT is a 3 1/2-hour test required by some colleges, particularly in the Midwest, the West, and some parts of the South. It combines aspects of both the SAT I and SAT II in one testing instrument. Scored on a scale from 0 (low) to 36 (high), the ACT reports scores for English, social sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics, plus a composite average of the four subjects. The ACT is given at centers around the world on scheduled testing dates. For further information, contact:

American College Testing  
2255 North Dubuque Road  
P.O. Box 168  
Iowa City, Iowa 52243  
Telephone: 319-337-1000

### **College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

The CLEP is administered by the College Board and offers six general examinations and 30 subject examinations. It is designed to allow students to receive college credit for knowledge gained outside the classroom. Started more than twenty five years ago, CLEP is now the nation's most widely accepted credit-by-examination program. Nearly two-thirds of all accredited institutions of higher education award credit for satisfactory scores on CLEP examinations. Over the years, these colleges have found that students who choose CLEP are motivated, intellectually curious, and independent learners. These are qualities they look for and value in their students. The "general" exams (English composition, humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences and history) measure knowledge accumulated in these broad areas of study. The tests are at the level of courses usually required in the first year or two of college. Colleges and universities may give credit for successfully completing the exam. Three or six semester hours of credit are usually awarded for satisfactory scores on each General Examination, and one to four semester credits for the subject exams. The subject exams are equivalent to end-of-the-year course exams in college and require a higher degree of specialized knowledge and training; each is 90 minutes long. Many colleges use the CLEP English examination to assess the writing skills of students.

The English Composition With Essay examination is given only in October, January, April, and June, but the other tests are given monthly at more than 1,200 locations nationwide and can be arranged for candidates abroad on request. Students can also take the CLEP exams during freshman orientation at college or at test centers in the United States. Likely candidates for the CLEP program are students who have been taking honors or advanced courses and who score in the top 25 percent on the SAT or ACT. Testing accommodations are available for students with disabilities.

### **Advanced Placement Program (AP)**

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

The AP program offers college-level courses and examinations in many academic areas. Students register in March or April to take the examinations in May. Colleges and universities have different policies on granting credit and/or advanced standing for students getting a grade of three or higher on these tests. See ch 12, pp 1 - 3 for further discussion of the Advanced Placement and the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Students can take the AP exam without taking the class.

## **DIAGNOSTIC TESTING**

Parents who are concerned about a child's educational progress may wish to obtain a general educational evaluation. If a learning disability or developmental delay is suspected, the Employee Consultation Service staff will make a referral to a diagnostician. It is difficult to obtain appropriate diagnostic testing at most overseas posts.

Diagnostic testing usually consists of four elements: intelligence testing, aptitude testing, achievement testing, and psychological screening. From these tests, the parent can learn what is reasonable to expect of a child, what type of school might best suit her/him, and how the child's academic achievement compares to U.S. norms for students of a certain age. Some commonly used tests include the following:

The **Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III)** consists of six verbal and six performance (nonverbal) subtests giving verbal, performance, and full-scale scores. Children with learning disabilities often have significant variations in subtest scores and a difference between verbal and performance scores which can be evaluated by trained counselors.

The **Slosson Intelligence Test** is an oral test that measures general intelligence, but with greater emphasis on verbal ability.

The **Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Revised** measures receptive or listening vocabulary.

The **Slingerland Screening Tests for Identifying Children With Specific Language Disability** involves writing words, phrases, and numbers to test visual and auditory memory and discrimination.

The **Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test** involves copying designs to test visual-motor perception.

The **Gray Oral Reading Test** measures reading fluency.

The **Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability - Revised** tests achievement in reading, mathematics, and general knowledge.

The **Wide-Range Achievement Test-Revised** measures skills in reading, spelling, and arithmetic.

Every child will not need to take all of these tests. The educational diagnostician will select appropriate tests based on background information and observation of the child.

Following the testing, the diagnostician reviews and interprets the tests before meeting with parents to share the results and recommendations. A written report follows and should include specific recommendations that the child's teacher can use as a guide in helping the child learn. School districts usually conduct their own testing.

A more complete discussion of the uses of diagnostic testing and its role in medical clearances is given in Chapter 10.

## **TESTING AND THE OVERSEAS STUDENT**

Many schools overseas have adequate school-based testing programs, but others (especially local and non-English-language schools) do not. Parents should review with school officials at post which standardized tests the school regularly administers. Copies of test results should be kept with the child's school records and **hand-carried** when the family transfers to a new post. If your child has never taken any standardized tests, you should contact the Office of Overseas Schools or the FLO Education and Youth Officer for guidance.

The SAT I and II are given overseas on six scheduled test dates a year. Registration forms and descriptive materials are usually available from school counselors. Registration should be made at least two months in advance. If there is no official testing site at post, administration of the test can usually be arranged. Contact the FLO Education and Youth Officer for further information.

The ACT is also given in centers around the world on scheduled testing dates. Applicants must register 4-to-6 weeks in advance. Many colleges that use the ACT do not require applicants outside the country to take it; instead, they advise students to take the test after they arrive on campus. Overseas students must make early plans to meet the test requirements for colleges in which they are interested. Occasionally test administration overseas is unavoidably postponed or canceled. If this happens, students should write, by airmail, to the college, explain the situation, and ask for advice. Usually colleges will make appropriate allowances for such emergencies. The FLO Education and Youth Officer may be contacted for assistance.

The SSAT is administered overseas twice a year, in January and in April. Overseas students who need to take the SSAT for admission to a boarding school or U.S. private school can make arrangements for group testing both in the U.S. and at some overseas locations or for individual testing at several U.S. sites including Washington, D.C. Individual testing may be arranged in the U.S. or overseas on dates other than the two testing dates for a higher fee. See the SSAT information bulletin for details, or contact the Education and Youth Officer for assistance.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

College Board  
Box 886  
New York, NY 10101  
Telephone: 212-713-8000

*Bulletin for the SAT Program*  
*Information Guide for the CLEP Program and Registration Guide*  
*Official Handbook for the CLEP Examinations*  
*PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin*  
*Taking the SAT I: Reasoning Tests*  
*Taking the SAT II: Subject Tests*

Available from  
CLEP  
PO Box 6601  
Princeton, NJ 08541-6601  
Telephone: 609-951-1026  
*CLEP Colleges*

Available from  
Secondary School Admission Test Board  
12 Stockton Street  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
Telephone: 609-683-4440  
*Secondary School Admission Test Guide - International*

### **SCHOOL RECORDS TO CARRY FROM POST TO POST**

Foreign Service parents must keep full, current, and easily transportable records of their children's academic careers. Unexpected assignment changes or evacuations can create a sudden need for current records. It is easier to obtain copies of transcripts, teacher narrative reports, and recommendations for college before leaving a post. Sophomores and juniors should consider collecting college recommendations when leaving a school, because of the difficulties in locating overseas faculty. A record that charts a child's social, emotional, and academic growth is a valuable information tool for teachers, counselors, educational advisors, and parents themselves.

A child's school folder should include the following items:

- All transcripts from previous grades/schools plus school profile information including programs, student population, staff background, and special features.

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

- Copies of standardized test scores such as the California, Iowa, Otis-Lennon, or Stanford achievement tests, the Metropolitan Readiness tests, or the SRA.
- Copies of other test scores such as the SSAT, the PSAT/NMSQT, the SAT I, and any SAT II Subject.
- Copies of profiles/brochures/handbooks from most recently attended school. This is especially important when transferring from one high school to another, but also needed when transferring from an overseas school to the United States.
- List of textbooks used in each subject in most recent grade or copy of program of study to help the new school know where to place the student.
- Copies of recommendations from principals, guidance counselors, and teachers to use when transferring from one school to another or when applying to colleges. Boarding schools prefer letters from English and math teachers.
- Copies of representative student work including essays, research papers, math and science papers, art projects, tests, and awards for achievement. Work showing teacher comments is especially helpful. Art students should develop a portfolio.

### ***PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS***

Parents are a child's first and most influential teachers, and parental involvement helps children learn better. At overseas posts, the importance of parental involvement cannot be overemphasized. The primary form of involvement should be a close monitoring of each child's progress through regular conferences with the teacher/counselor/principal, as needed or appropriate. Additionally, there are many other ways to become involved in a school including participating in leadership and decision-making positions, and contributing time, goods, and fund-raising for special projects.

### ***PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES***

In addition to explaining school programs and goals, regular parent-teacher conferences offer the teacher an opportunity to learn about a child's home life and about how parents view their child's capabilities and needs. Parents should prepare for the conference by looking over the child's homework, tests, and special activity papers to gain a sense of the child's progress. Answers to the questions below should give a clear idea of a child's academic and social strengths and weaknesses and suggest ways to reinforce school objectives at home.

- How would you assess my child's ability to learn?
- How has my child progressed since the last reporting period? If progress has not been satisfactory, what can we do to improve it?
- What is my child's instructional level in math and reading? How does it correspond with her/his grade placement?

- What achievement, intelligence, or vocational aptitude tests have been given to my child in the past year? What do the scores mean?
- Does my child complete assignments in the time allotted? If work is finished quickly, is remaining time spent productively? If work is not completed on time, what can be done to help?
- Is my child able to work independently?
- How does my child relate to peers?
- How does my child relate to those in authority?
- Is my child flexible in responding to changes in routine?
- Does my child have a positive self-image?
- What are my child's specific strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there early warning signals, such as dramatic changes in learning progress, squinting, extreme fatigue, or irritability that I should know about?
- What can we do at home to support our child's academic and social progress at school? Can you recommend enrichment materials, books, or activities to reinforce classroom learning?
- Would you advise any of the following summer activities: remedial summer school, enrichment courses, career-related summer job, home learning activities, or a complete rest from school pressures?

If the purpose of the parent-teacher conference is to discuss a child's unacceptable school behavior or poor academic performance, parents should be aware that emotions may surface that divert attention from the central task of examining the child's performance in the classroom and determining how it can be improved.

Parents should try to resolve questions or issues directly with the teacher rather than with his/her supervisors. The teacher, with day-to-day responsibility for the child, can best help the parent understand what the school is trying to accomplish. After a conference, however, it may be necessary to make appointments to see other members of the school staff or an outside consultant about any special problems the child may be having.

### ***SERVING ON SCHOOL BOARDS***

Serving as a member of any school board is an important public service. With the added complications of the host country's different laws and customs, service as a school board member overseas demands even greater dedication and wisdom. The quality of a school's program is dependent largely upon the leadership and decision-making abilities of the governing board.

The major functions of a school board are the following:

- to hire the school's chief administrator;
- to develop viable policies relating to school administration;

- to evaluate aspects of the school program, such as suitability of facilities and equipment or effectiveness of business operations;
- to influence the hiring of qualified teachers;
- to keep the community informed about the school and its programs; and
- to approve the school's proposed educational programs and the funds necessary to support them.

It must be noted that the only legal authority lies in the corporate action of the board; an individual school board member has no legal authority to act.

School boards are sometimes appointed, but more often they are elected by the school's general assembly. Many overseas American schools have a U.S. Mission representative on the board, often in a nonvoting capacity. All school board members must be willing to place the best interests of the school above all other considerations, to maintain confidentiality of information received by virtue of being on the board, to communicate the needs and programs of the school to the community, and to think constructively and creatively about solutions to school problems. The ideal board member is interested in education, has a broad knowledge of schools, has some experience with schools, and has the time to dedicate to school board service.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from

Office of Overseas Schools

See Chapter 1, page 5 for contact information

*The Challenge: Overseas Schools, Making Them Work*, a videotape with accompanying handbook, *Overseas School Boards: Facing the Issues*

## **OTHER WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN OVERSEAS SCHOOLS**

Parents in overseas schools (just as parents in the United States have done for years) may serve as room parents, field trip and social event chaperones, library aides, clerical aides, tutors, reading and math lab assistants, art aides, health clinic assistants, and bus monitors. They can also serve on PTA committees and organize fund-raising events. Volunteering gives parents personal satisfaction, helps round out school programs, and gives children a sense of pride about their parents' interest in their schooling. Parents should always be aware that cultural differences often affect how a school is run. Some cultures do not encourage parental involvement and care should be taken not to offend when offering assistance.

A Family Liaison Office survey of parental involvement in overseas schools described many ways parents contribute to their children's schools:

- By raising money for extracurricular and enrichment activities, parents have helped to provide field trips and musical group tours. They have paid for special equipment including playground equipment, computers, CPR equipment, and

library books. They have provided support services in the form of hiring a school nurse and renovating classrooms.

- Parents have provided expertise and support for activities such as an international speakers series, college nights (acting in the capacity of alumni/ae), new student welcoming committees, seminars on adolescence or cultural adaptation, and talent nights.
- They have organized preschools or play groups, after school activities (sports, drama, arts and crafts, music), field days, holiday programs, and teacher appreciation ceremonies.
- Others have assisted as room parents, tutors, library aides, test administrators, and physical education assistants.
- Still others have served on special committees for school accreditation, curriculum, textbook procurement, and parent/faculty advising.

## **Chapter 4 DAY CARE FOR FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILIES**

*As two-career families become the norm in our society, day care has become an important decision for many Foreign Service families. In the Washington area, because of the high number of single parent families and families in which both parents work, there is a great demand for good, affordable day care. Choice is complicated by the many types of day care available. Matching the appropriate setting with a child takes careful thought and often a fair amount of time.*

*Overseas the availability of good day care centers varies greatly as does the quality and cost of caregivers in the home. The Family Liaison Office publishes an annual Composite Child Care Report which gives a brief description of the resources available post by post. The information is provided by the posts and the report is invaluable for young families considering their next assignment. Copies of the report are sent to CLOs and to Administrative Officers at posts where there is no CLO. Whether overseas or in Washington there are common concerns for parents. Much of the following discussion of child care options in the Washington area offers guidelines that parents can apply overseas when considering child care. Overseas, for post specific information beyond the post's entry in the Composite Child Care Report, parents may want to contact other families with young children and the CLO at post, if there is one.*

### **DAY CARE**

Appropriate day care for young children should offer a reliable, stable arrangement; a healthy, safe environment; interesting, stimulating daily activities; and caregivers who like children. Day care falls into two broad categories - care provided within the home/family structure and care provided in the community.

### **DAY CARE IN THE HOME/FAMILY STRUCTURE**

The most popular type of day care in the United States is provided by older relatives or close friends either in their home or the child's. Unfortunately, Foreign Service families often do not have an extended family or even a structure of close friends upon whom they can call for this type of day care, even when in Washington. The second type of home care, one-on-one care in the child's home, is often a more familiar situation to the Foreign Service family.

A person is hired to care for the children either on a live-in or live-out basis. The child remains in his/her own home, and the caregiver usually is available for last-minute or emergency situations. This alternative may be necessary or desirable, especially for an infant or for more than one child. One-on-one caregivers can be hired through an employment agency or nanny placement service, or found by word-of-mouth

recommendations. The Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW) helps Foreign Service families who are looking for child care in the Washington area. For information contact them at:

AAFSW (Child Care Referral Chair)  
Suite 36  
5125 MacArthur Boulevard NW  
Washington, DC 20016  
Telephone: 202-362-6514  
Fax: 202-362-6589

### ***BRINGING HOUSEHOLD HELP TO THE UNITED STATES***

Many Foreign Service families fortunate enough to find good household help while serving overseas may consider bringing him/her to the United States for a Washington assignment. While the advantages are obvious, many questions arise about the logistics and legalities. Because Foreign Service employees expect to go back overseas after a Washington tour of duty, their household help may apply for a B/1 visa under the provisions of the Foreign Affairs Manual (9 FAM 41.31, note 6).

In order to qualify, the person must have 1 year of experience as a domestic worker and have been employed by the family for a minimum of 6 months in full-time status. There must be evidence that the employee is a bona fide nonimmigrant who has strong family ties in the host country, a commitment to accompany the employer to an onward assignment from the United States, or a past record of accompanying the family out of the country.

A contract showing the financial responsibilities of the employer is required. The contract must show that the employer is providing free room and board, the higher of the minimum or prevailing wage, and round trip airfare. In addition, the contract must guarantee all benefits normally provided in that location. These usually include the following: health and accident insurance, paid sick leave (even for an extended period), vacations and holidays, tax liability, and clothing for a seasonal climate. The employer must pay social security and Medicare taxes on a yearly basis for the employee. Employees falling under the FAM regulations may not supplement their income in the United States by seeking additional employment, either domestic or commercial, and the contract must state that. Finally, the contract must provide for 2 weeks termination notice. Employers of household help must also obtain an identification number through report and payment of both the employer's and the employee's tax contributions.

The employee's cultural adaptation to the United States must also be considered. Foreign Service families generally experience a reentry adjustment period of their own, so they should appreciate the challenge faced by an alien. Employees will probably need help learning how to use public transportation and telephones, where to make contact with others

of their nationality, and how to establish a bank account or make arrangements to send money back to their families. If they are accustomed to extended family ties, they may need much more emotional support than expected in order to overcome the loneliness and make a positive adjustment. Foreign Service families considering bringing a household help to the United States must be aware of the serious commitment of funds, time, and energy that is required, and must realize that even with long-term employees, it does not always work.

Copies of a Department Notice, *Legal Obligations Pertaining to Household Employees Performing Services in the United States*, are available from the Family Liaison Office.

### **DAY CARE IN THE COMMUNITY**

The major types of community day care are the all-day center, the group home, and the family day care arrangement.

**All-day centers** are organized to meet the needs of working parents. They are open all day and all year long and usually take children from 3 to 5 years old, although some all-day centers are designed just for infants and others will take 2-year-olds still in diapers. Some offer services for children through the 6th grade, providing before- and after-school care, plus transportation between the center and public schools.

**Group homes** are smaller than all-day centers but larger than family day care homes. One caregiver and at least one assistant care for more than 6 but fewer than 13 children in the home of the caregiver.

**Family day care homes** have one caregiver caring for up to six children, usually including the caregiver's own children.

### **DAY CARE REGULATIONS AND LICENSING**

Parents must become familiar with the day care licensing regulations for the area in which they live. Individual jurisdictions in the Washington area may or may not regulate day care arrangements. The forms of care that are regulated, how they are defined, and the specific standards also differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. If licensing is required, it is against the law to operate without a license. Unfortunately, licensing only means that minimum requirements have been met. ***It does not mean approval of the child care arrangements.*** Overseas, regulations governing the operations of a day care center may be more strict or not exist at all depending on the country.

### **RESOURCES**

The following organizations provide child care information for Washington area jurisdictions.

***District of Columbia***

Washington Child Development Council  
2121 Decatur Place NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Telephone: 202-387-0001

***Maryland***

Charles County Office of Licensing and Regulation  
(Information for St. Mary, Charles and Calvert Counties)  
PO Box 260  
Leonardtown, MD 20650  
Telephone: 301-475-3770

Frederick County Child Care Consortium  
22 South Market Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
Telephone: 301-695-4508

Montgomery County Child Care Connection  
332 West Edmonston Drive  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Telephone: 301-279-1773

***Virginia***

Alexandria Child Care Information Service  
Department of Human Resources, Unit 2  
7525 Mt. Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
Telephone: 703-838-0750

Arlington County Child Care Office  
Department of Human Resources  
1801 North George Mason Drive  
Arlington, VA 22207-9831  
Telephone: 703-358-5101

Fairfax County Office of Children  
3701 Pender Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Telephone: 703-359-5860

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Falls Church City Department of Housing and Human Services  
300 Park Avenue  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
Telephone: 703-241-5005

Loudoun County Department of Social Services  
102 Heritage Way, Suite 200  
Leesburg, VA 22075  
Telephone: 703-777-0360

Prince William County Department of Social Services  
7987 Ashton Avenue, Suite 200  
Manassas, VA 22110-3101  
Telephone: 703-792-7500

### ***MAKING THE DAY CARE CHOICE***

Some of the important considerations in choosing a day care arrangement are:

**Parents' Work Schedule:** Many day care centers accommodate only standard workdays. Parents must check the center's policy on arriving late to pick up the child, holiday closings, and accommodations for a sick child. Family day care and in-home arrangements are usually more flexible than day care centers or group homes.

**Location:** Some parents prefer child care near their home; others prefer it near the work place. Transportation, neighborhood friendships, and needs of siblings will all play a part in this decision.

**Fees:** Ten to 25 percent of gross income can be needed for child care. Two children often double the cost. In considering possibilities, make sure all fees and charges, including those for transportation, are included. Remember that the employer must make Social Security payments for in-home care-givers.

**Age Groupings:** Not all programs take children of all ages. Some separate children by age: infant (6 weeks to 15 months), toddler (15 to 24 months), older toddler (24 to 33 months), preschool (2-1/2 to 5 years), kindergarten (5 and 6 years), school age (6 years and older). Children need to be with others their own age. However, situations which have children of different ages can provide modeling experiences for younger children and instill a sense of responsibility in the older ones.

**Group Size:** Generally, children do better in small groups. Infants need a staff/child ratio of one caregiver to four infants. Toddlers should be in groups of three to ten; preschoolers do well in groups up to 20. Montessori schools, because of the nature of their programs, can usually accommodate a class of 30 children without difficulty.

**Staff Training:** Parents should always ask about the background of the director, the teachers, and the aides. College degrees are not the only sign of good training; courses in child development or early childhood education are also important. The most effective training is course work about children with an emphasis on supervised, direct work.

**Program Goals:** Programs with clear goals and goal-oriented staff training tend to provide the best environment for children.

**Parental Role:** Parents should never abdicate their role. In-home caregivers should be open to discussion and suggestions. Community care centers should welcome parent participation.

**Discipline:** Guidance and discipline should be applied in a way that helps the child and is not humiliating or harsh. Caregivers must be patient and skilled in helping children learn self-control and self-discipline.

**Administration:** An open, friendly, interested, caring, experienced administrator with a knowledge of children and skills in management is essential.

**Environment:** A good day care environment should include many of the following factors:

- opportunities to explore and test new skills while being protected from dangerous situations;
- soft toys, soft materials, and soft laps;
- quiet activities, games, music, stories, group and individual play;
- props and toys for acting out fantasies;
- clear rules and a knowledge of where everything goes;
- quiet corners or nooks where children can withdraw from the group when they want to;
- opportunities to know adults of various ages, sexes, and cultures;
- space divided so that small groups of children can work or play together;
- safe playground equipment appropriate for the ages of the children.

## ***HOW TO FIND GOOD DAY CARE***

Ideally, the search for appropriate day care should begin a year before it is needed. Families in Washington concerned about finding a place for their child can take these steps ahead of time:

- Remember that areas with good public schools generally have good day care.
- Contact friends and former neighbors to find out what is available in different neighborhoods.
- Contact county agencies on p 6-8 for lists of licensed day care facilities in each jurisdiction. This information changes frequently, often without notice, so families should contact the agencies by telephone, if possible.

- Visit day care programs while on home leave or vacation and put the child on a waiting list.
- Check the local telephone Yellow Pages to locate options within an appropriate geographical range.
- Ask other parents of young children about their day care arrangements.

Caregivers often advertise on bulletin boards in grocery stores, churches, local colleges, community centers, and apartment buildings as well as in neighborhood newspapers. As the importance of day care becomes more apparent, many private companies and government agencies offer assistance to parents. Check with your agency to see if child care facilities are available or being planned. The State Department child care center is scheduled to open in 1996. Parents employed in the private sector should also check the possibility of on-site day care at either their own or a neighboring company.

Abroad, in some countries many of the same resources and sometimes more are available. In others, information is scarce and parents will have to rely on the Mission community for advice and information.

## **RESOURCES**

You can order pamphlets on child care from:

Child Care Action Campaign  
330 - 7th Avenue, 17th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Telephone: 212-239-0138

*Directory of Accredited Child Care Programs in the Washington Metropolitan Region* covers accreditation as well as listing child care centers and family child care providers in the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. You can order a free copy from:

The Information Center  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002-4226  
Telephone: 202-962-3256 (1 - 5 p.m. weekdays)

## **PRESCHOOL/NURSERY SCHOOL OPTIONS**

Nursery or preschool represents the child's very first educational experience and often determines whether the child enjoys and is successful in later schooling experiences. Just as with day care arrangements, parents choosing a nursery or preschool must first think about their own goals and needs. Consider the following issues.

**Cost:** In Washington, cost ranges from no cost or sliding-scale for public school pre-kindergarten up to \$9,000 for a private school. At post, cost varies from country to country. Parents should note that the Education Allowance does not cover preschool or nursery school costs and covers only 1 year of Kindergarten.

**Toilet-training:** Some schools require 2-year-olds to be trained.

**Schedule of care:** Do you need all day, extended day, or part time care?

**Structure:** Is the emphasis on academics or play or a combination of both?

**Parental involvement:** Cooperative nursery schools require parental participation.

**Physical plant:** Look closely at the building and the equipment.

**Student-teacher ratio:** For 2-year-olds, there should be one teacher for every seven children; for 3- and 4-year-olds, there should be one teacher for every ten children.

**Balance:** Look at the ratio of boys to girls and the number of children of different ethnic backgrounds.

### ***CHOOSING A NURSERY SCHOOL OR A PRESCHOOL***

The basic difference between a preschool and a nursery school is that a nursery is based on a play/socializing experience and a preschool has an academic enrichment component. The choice will depend on the child's age and special needs as well as the parents' expectations and educational philosophies.

Parents should visit at least four or five different schools even if they decide that their first choice is perfect. Ideally, for a family in Washington the visits should take place in the fall of the year before the child is ready to attend. Classroom observation is essential; the parent should also have a tour of the entire facility and a meeting with the director.

Following are some of the things parents should look for in a preschool or nursery school classroom whether assigned in Washington or elsewhere:

- Do the children and the teacher appear to be happy and relaxed?
- How do the teacher and the children relate to each other?
- How does the teacher handle problems that come up?
- Is there a wide range of hands-on material and are the children allowed to use it?
- What are your feelings about the classroom?

After observing in the classroom, the parents should meet with the school's director. The wonderful classroom teacher may not be there when the child attends the school; the director's personality determines what kind of a school it is. Parents should discuss their child's needs as well as what was observed in the classroom. In addition, the director's answers to the following questions will give parents a very good idea whether the school is suitable:

- What is the school's daily routine?
- What is the academic component of the school? Is it written down?
- What is the policy concerning the child's initial adjustment?

- What is the policy toward discipline? The parent should discuss what was observed in the classroom.
- What are the staff qualifications and length of service? Although high turnover may indicate problems, a very low turnover might mean that new ideas are not welcome.
- How is communication between the school and the parent fostered?
- Are parents welcome at any time?
- What is the policy regarding illnesses or late pickups?

After the child has entered, the parent must continue monitoring the school situation. Impromptu visits should be made occasionally. The school should be contacted immediately if the child's behavior changes in any way. If factors at home change, the school should be advised so that it will be aware of any difficulties the child may be having.

### ***PUBLIC PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS***

For Foreign Service parents assigned to Washington, the area's public schools offer some programs. *Public School Programs and Admissions Requirements* in Chapter 6 of this book tells which school districts have pre-kindergarten programs. Because the availability of these programs could be affected by changing budgets, parents should contact the district directly to verify the information.

## **Chapter 5 EDUCATING THE FOREIGN SERVICE CHILD WHILE POSTED ABROAD**

*The quality of schooling available at individual posts is one of the most important factors Foreign Service parents consider when choosing an assignment. When the bid list comes out, it is wise for families to explore the schooling options at all of the posts under consideration.*

*When going overseas for the first time, parents will begin to make some basic decisions: do we want to keep our children consistently in one system or is a bilingual education an important consideration for us? What special needs do our children have? Fortunately, as detailed in Chapter 1, there are excellent resources available to parents to help us make good decisions.*

*Before going overseas, it is also vital to understand the special allowances available to Foreign Service families to enable us to provide our children with an education comparable to the education they would receive at a public school in the United States. Because there are frequent changes, it is important for parents to have current and accurate information about them.*

### **EDUCATION ALLOWANCES**

According to the State Department's Standardized Regulations (S.R. 271.a), the Secretary of State is authorized to grant to a U.S. citizen employee "an education allowance or payment of travel costs to assist with the extraordinary and necessary expenses, not otherwise compensated for, in providing adequate education for his/her eligible family members, incurred because of the employee's service in a foreign area or areas." This allowance will be either an **education allowance** for children at the elementary or secondary school levels or an **educational travel allowance** for college students or for secondary school students in lieu of an education allowance.

Education allowances are designed to assist a family with the necessary expenses to obtain kindergarten, elementary, and secondary educational services ordinarily provided without charge by public schools in the United States. There are actually three educational methods: *school at post*, *school away from post*, and *home study*. The scope of these allowances is set out in the *Standardized Regulations*, chapters 270 and 280. Rates are cited in Section 920, Post Classification and Payment Tables. Amendments are made bi-weekly and issued monthly by the Government Printing Office. Copies of the *Standardized Regulations* (SR) and the pertinent agency implementing regulations are available through the officer designated to authorize allowances or the Regional Financial Management Office (RFMO) at post. The Family Liaison Office distributes copies of the *Educational Allowance and Educational Travel Standardized Regulations* to Community Liaison Offices whenever there is a change. The education allowance specialist of the Office of Allowances

(A/OPR/ALS) can answer specific questions about education allowances and eligibility requirements. See Chapter 1 of this book for contact information for the Office of Allowances.

Education allowances for grades K-12 are granted for those posts where the cost incurred for an eligible family member's "adequate" schooling is more than the cost in a U.S. public school. A school is considered adequate if it has a comparable American curriculum; has no mandatory religious affiliation; and if a child of normal ability who has successfully completed a given grade or its equivalent at that school will be accepted in the next higher grade in a U.S. public school.

The determination of adequacy of schooling for school-age dependents overseas usually begins with a request by post to the Office of Overseas Schools for an assessment by a Regional Education Officer (REO), who is a professional educator. It is the policy of the Office of Overseas Schools to proceed in a careful manner in assessing the adequacy of schooling at post. The REO visits post and makes a thorough review of the schooling available and consults with Embassy officials and parents who have used the school or schools being assessed. Usually, a U.S. accrediting agency is requested to send a team to review the schooling situation. After the REO has completed the review and read the accreditation team's report, the REO makes a recommendation to the Office of Allowances (A/ALS) on the adequacy of schooling at post by grade level. It is possible, for example, for certain grades to be considered adequate and others inadequate. For the grade levels which are considered adequate, A/ALS adjusts the at post education allowance to equal the cost of the least expensive adequate school at post. Generally, the allowance's maximum rates are based on the least expensive adequate school at the post.

The following are major points of the education allowances:

- If adequate schools are available at the post, no higher allowance can be established for attendance at a school located away from the post. (Note: the allowance for attending a school away from post is identical to the at post allowance.)
- A supplementary instruction education allowance is available in addition to the regular school at-post allowance, but only if the child is enrolled in a school at post. Supplementary instruction may be necessary if academic subjects generally offered in U.S. public schools are not provided; if the curriculum is offered in a foreign language; or if a child needs additional instruction to enter a grade or remain in the same grade. Supplementary instruction is discussed further in Ch 5, p16.
- If there is no adequate school at post for a given grade, a school away from post allowance is established to assist with the cost of tuition, room, board, and periodic transportation between the post and the nearest locality where an adequate boarding school is available. The Office of Allowances is responsible for determining the school away from post allowance rates. Each rate is

composed of two factors: an average cost of overseas and U.S. boarding schools for tuition, room, and board; and three round trips from each country to the nearest location where boarding schools are available.

- Employees stationed abroad with eligible school age family members are free to choose any school in the United States or abroad to obtain educational services. When using public schools that do not have boarding facilities, private boarding with family or friends may be included. The employee may receive an education allowance up to the established maximum rate for the educational method selected at her/his foreign post. However, ***if the child attends school in the United States and a natural, adoptive, or step-parent with legal custody also resides in the United States, no education allowance can be paid.***
- If the employee chooses to use correspondence courses for home study instead of the school at post allowance, the employee may be reimbursed for the cost of home study instruction within the amount established for this type of education. The cost of a tutor is not included. Home study is discussed further in Ch 5, p 19.
- The established allowances vary by school grade at most posts, but may be paid regardless of the school attended. However, the authorizing official is required to lower the payment when the employee's costs during the school year justify a reduction.

Education allowances are normally reimbursed or paid each school year. Advance payments (lump-sum or installment) as required by the school for educational expenses are payable when advantageous to the U. S. Government, but ***cannot*** be applied for and paid until the employee has arrived at post. The grants are adjustable when required by changes in costs that occur during the school year. In that case, the adjustment request must be made by the post.

A handicapped child may receive, in lieu of the regular education allowance each school year, a separate allowance for educational services at post, for home study including tutoring, or for a school away from post (SR 274.12c and 276.4). Additional information about the handicapped child allowance can be found in Ch 10, p 4 of this book.

## ***EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL***

Educational travel is a benefit that pays for a student's transportation between the employee's post and a college in the United States. One round trip is provided each 12-month period for full-time undergraduate students before age 23. College students enrolled in an academic year abroad are permitted to travel from their foreign location to post for family visitation. The student must be enrolled full-time in a college in the U.S. and attending the foreign school in conjunction with a program of the U.S. college. Educational travel is also available for U.S. high school students in grades 9-12 in lieu of an education allowance and could be used for students in boarding school who have a custodial guardian living in the

U.S. (SR 280). The educational travel benefit covers actual expenses for transportation at lowest available fares, travel per diem when authorized, and unaccompanied baggage.

The first round trip under educational travel must originate outside the United States. The student must reside for 14 consecutive days outside the United States prior to return to the United States on educational travel. The annual trip is defined as one round trip at any time within a 12-month period of the eligible family member's schooling. When educational travel begins in the United States, only one leg of the round trip is authorized. Any portion of the round trip not taken in the 12-month period cannot accrue to a subsequent period.

The date of the first educational travel trip marks the anniversary date for subsequent educational travel trips. For example, if the student travels to post at Christmas on orders, the first trip back to school will be the first leg of educational travel. The student cannot get an educational travel trip from post for the second year until the date of the first trip anniversary or within 14 days of that date. When a dependent has arrived in the United States under the educational travel authority, the employee may not receive an education allowance on behalf of that dependent for the 12-month period immediately following such travel. Note also that educational travel to post is not authorized when the employee is scheduled to transfer or take home leave to the United States within 30 days of the student's scheduled departure for the post.

## ***CHOOSING A SCHOOL OVERSEAS***

Even before arriving at a new post, parents often must choose among various schooling alternatives: local schools; Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS); American-curriculum community or international schools; British, French, or German schools; and church-affiliated or missionary schools. The choice should be determined by which type is most suitable for the child given his/her needs and interests.

Once at post and before choosing any overseas school, parents may have an opportunity to ask questions of a prospective school's principal or headmaster. These questions should reflect the parents' deepest concerns. Questions asked in a non-threatening manner indicate interest and involvement in a child's education, remind the school of its need to be accountable for its program, and give parents the information needed to make a correct choice. Some of the information is also available in the microfiche of the Summary School Information forms, described in Chapter 1 of this book and available at post and at several locations in the Washington area including AID, USIA, A/OS, FLO, and OBC. Use the following questions as a guide:

***School history:*** How long has the school been in existence? How long has it been at its present location? What is the school's reputation in the community?

***Philosophical orientation:*** Is it traditional, progressive, or experimental? Is instruction individualized?

***Curriculum:*** What curriculum is offered? If not based on the American system, will the child have difficulty moving to a U.S. school? Which languages are taught, and at what

level? Is the host country culture studied? Are art and music programs offered? Do high school courses include vocational and business subjects, enriched or Advanced Placement courses, or the International Baccalaureate Program? How do the school's students fare after returning to their home schools?

**Testing:** Does the school have a regular testing program based on standardized tests? Which tests are used at the elementary level and in high school? Is the school a test center for the PSAT and/or SAT? Are profiles of recent test scores available?

**College preparation:** What help is provided to high school juniors and seniors selecting a college? Which colleges and universities have recent graduates attended?

**Teacher/counselor-student ratio:** What is the size of the average elementary, middle school, or high school class? What is the ratio of counselors to students? Is counseling available for younger students as well as high-schoolers?

**Teacher credentials:** What is the average length of tenure of teachers? What percentage hold degrees in their teaching fields? What percentage hold advanced degrees? How many teachers are recruited out of country?

**Discipline:** How is discipline administered? Is an honor and/or demerit system used? Which offenses result in dismissal/expulsion? How are minor infractions dealt with?

**Newcomers:** Is there a peer sponsor system for newcomers? Do teachers keep an eye on newcomers and help them with the initial "culture shock?" If instruction is not in English, are there provisions for immersing a child in the new language? Is advanced registration required? Are children admitted throughout the school year?

**Extracurricular activities:** What is the range of extracurricular activities, including organized sports? Do parents raise funds, teach, or chaperone programs? Is transportation provided for activities after school?

**Parental involvement:** Is there a PTA or similar organization? What is its role? How often does it meet? What percentage of parents participate? What has it sponsored or accomplished recently? Is parental involvement in the education process encouraged? Is there a volunteer program (class aides, library aides, etc.)?

**School board:** What is the composition of the school board? Is the U.S. Mission represented? Are members elected or appointed? How have Americans contributed to the board in the past?

**Transportation:** Is transportation provided? Is there a fee?

**Physical plant:** Where is the school located in relation to the U.S. Mission and the residential areas? Are security measures taken seriously? Are there adequate classrooms and sufficient heating/air-conditioning if necessary? Is potable water available? Are the classrooms attractively decorated?

**Tuition:** What is the tuition? Are there other fees?

**Dress:** Is there a dress code? Are uniforms required? Can they be purchased locally?

One consideration may be whether to put the child in an English-language or a foreign-language school. The advantages of having the child become fluent in a foreign language are considerable. However, parents should be aware that the educational

philosophies of these schools can be quite different - they are not merely American-curriculum schools taught in a foreign language. Moving a child in and out of foreign-language schools can have serious effects on his/her overall continuity of education. This is particularly true if the child is a weak student or has learning differences. Before making such a choice, parents should understand their own ultimate educational goals. Do they plan to have the child attend foreign-language schools exclusively from post to post? What type of university training do they foresee?

French and German educational philosophies differ markedly from those of the American system. The curricula are centralized under the country's Ministry of Education so that local schools have less independence. These schools favor the memorization of a body of knowledge rather than experimentation or participation; fewer electives are offered; and less value is placed on extracurricular activities.

Parents considering foreign language education for their children may want to contact FLO's Education and Youth Officer for materials regarding second language acquisition.

### **COMPARISON OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

English-language educational systems can be divided into two categories. In *externally assessed systems* (British or International Baccalaureate), students are examined through centrally administered examinations such as the British O and A Levels. The caliber of the school or teachers is measured by the relative success or failure of their students in these examinations. In the *internally assessed systems* (American, Canadian, international schools), the teachers are given responsibility for preparing the course outlines and administering exams.

**American schools** overseas are broadly comparable to U.S. public or private schools. Educational standards are maintained through a complicated process of inspections, curriculum guidelines, and teacher training. However, the value of marks given in any Canadian, American, or international school may vary from school to school, and any two principals might interpret a child's standing differently based upon marks. For this reason, parents should take samples of the child's class work as well as report cards to post. If school profiles exist, they should be filed with the child's educational records. Because most American schools overseas recruit regularly in the United States for administrative and staff positions, these schools are more easily able to remain current with educational trends in the United States. Many of these schools encourage, and some even offer, in-service or university-related courses for their faculties.

**British schools** at overseas posts vary more in quality and facilities than accredited American or international schools that are regularly inspected. While many Foreign Service parents have been very satisfied with the education their children have received at these schools, it is important to remember that the educational culture is different. Areas which should be investigated at the elementary level include the ages that children are expected to

begin to read and move into mathematical facts, methods of classroom discipline, school and playground safety, and parent participation.

The major curriculum differences, however, are at the secondary level. While students complete secondary education at about the same age, the methods and amount of study under the two systems are different. Under the British system, the *O (Ordinary) Level* begins once the student has passed the Common Entrance Examinations, at about age 14. O level course work is broad, general, and covers a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 subjects. Concepts in mathematics and sciences are taught simultaneously and at deeper levels of complexity as the student advances, rather than discretely, as in the American system. (This is also generally true of the Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand systems.) The O Level program takes approximately two years to complete; the student then takes the National General Certificate of Education O Level Examination. Completion of the O Level program is generally considered the equivalent of an American high school education. However, students must continue their studies through *A (Advanced) Level* in order to qualify for British university entrance.

The A Level consists of two or three specific subjects in the student's area of interest and competence studied in depth for 1 to 2 years. Upon completion, the student takes the General Certificate of Education A Level Examination in the subjects studied. Success in a subject examination is the equivalent of a U.S. college freshman course or an Advanced Placement course and examination. In order to qualify for entrance into a British university, the student must receive a grade of A, B, or C on a minimum of five General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations, two of which are at the A Level. Most students study all science or all arts at the A Level, thus specializing earlier than in the American system.

**International schools** vary widely from post to post. The organizing principle of these schools is their service to the children of the expatriate community, including the diplomatic corps, missionaries, military forces, foreign aid workers, and corporate employees, whether English-speaking or not. There are several hundred international schools throughout the world situated in cosmopolitan cities as well as in very remote locations.

Many English-language expatriate schools follow the U.S. system of instruction and course sequence, enabling most students to enter U.S. colleges without deficiencies. Others follow the British system, and still others offer both U.S. and British and/or Canadian educational programs and prepare students to sit for either the General Certificate of Secondary Education or other terminal exams or for the SATs. Some international schools offer the International Baccalaureate (IB), a two-year program offered worldwide at the senior high school level. See Ch 12, p 2 for a description of this program.

Knowing who sponsors an international school and how it is directed helps to understand its philosophy and admissions procedures. Following are several types of sponsoring organizations:

- American-sponsored schools assisted by the Office of Overseas Schools: children of U.S. Government employees usually have priority for enrollment.

- DoDDS system: Primarily serving the children of U.S. military personnel, DoDDS will admit other children on a space-available, tuition-paying basis. Children of U.S. Government employees abroad are given priority in admissions after military children.
- Parent-sponsored schools directed by an elected school board made up of parents: Unless the school receives assistance from A/OS, U.S. Government dependent children do not necessarily have priority or guaranteed admission.
- Schools sponsored by a religious or missionary group: Usually governed by an elected school board, priority is usually given to children with the same religious affiliation.
- Schools sponsored by a corporation such as Aramco: The children of corporation employees have priority.
- Proprietary schools.

In addition to the educational resources described in Chapter 1 of this book, the following organizations provide information on overseas schools.

***Association of American Schools in South America (AASSA)***

AASSA Regional Development Center  
14750 NW 77th Court, Suite 210  
Miami Lakes, FL 33016  
Telephone: 305-821-0345  
Fax: 305-821-4244

***Association of American Schools of Central America, Colombia-Caribbean, and Mexico***

c/o American School of Quito  
APO AA 34039  
Telephone: 593-2-472-974  
Fax: 593-2-472-972

***Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA)***

c/o International School of Kenya  
PO Box 14103  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Telephone: 254-2-58-24-21  
Fax: 254-2-58-05-96

***Central and Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA)***

c/o American School of Warsaw  
American Embassy Warsaw  
Department of State

Washington, DC 20521-5010  
Telephone and Fax: 48-22-424061

***Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS)***

6th Floor  
4040 North Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22204  
Telephone: 703-696-4437

***East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools (EARCOS)***

Virginia Tech Graduate Center  
2990 Telestar Court, Room 314  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Telephone: 703-280-4690  
Fax: 703-280-4890

***European Council of International Schools (ECIS)***

21 Lavant Street  
Petersfield, Hampshire  
GU32 3EL United Kingdom  
Telephone: 441-730-268244  
Fax: 441-730-267914

***International School Services, Inc. (ISS)***

P.O. Box 5910  
Princeton, NJ 08543  
or for express delivery:  
15 Roszel Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
Telephone: 609-452-0990

ISS is a non-profit educational organization based in the United States. It provides stateside support services to American and international schools overseas, including staff recruitment. It also publishes the *ISS Directory of Overseas Schools*, a comprehensive guide to over 400 English-language, American curriculum schools listed by country.

***Inter-Regional Center for Curriculum and Materials Development (IRC)***

Apartado Aereo 3250  
Barranquilla, Colombia  
Telephone: 57-58-598-589  
or  
PO Box 020470

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Tuscaloosa, AL 35402  
Telephone: 205-391-0727  
Fax: 205-345-0299

***Mediterranean Association of International Schools (MAIS)***

c/o American School of Madrid  
Apartado 80  
28080 Madrid, Spain  
Telephone: 34-1-357-2154  
Fax: 34-1-357-2678

***Near East South Asia Council for Overseas Schools (NESAS)***

c/o The American Colleges of Greece  
P.O. Box 60018  
153 42 Aghia, Paraskevi  
Athens, Greece  
Telephone: 30-1-600-9821  
Fax: 30-1-600-9928

## **RESOURCES**

Available from  
Peterson's Guides  
PO Box 2123  
Princeton, NJ 08543-2123  
Telephone: 609-243-9111  
*Guide to Independent Secondary Schools*

Available from  
Porter Sargent's Publishers  
11 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
Telephone: 617-523-1670  
*Schools Abroad of Interest to Americans*

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND ALTERNATIVE STUDY PROGRAMS**

Foreign Service families overseas make use of correspondence study programs in a variety of ways: to take the place of a school; to supplement the local school curriculum; or to form the curriculum for a parent-established American School.

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

**Home Study:** When there is no regular school program at post, or only a small number of students in a grade, home study through correspondence courses may be a viable alternative. Since it lacks the socializing aspect of school, individual home study usually should not be a long-term solution. However, with proper motivation on the part of the student, regular school hours each day, and careful attention on the part of the monitor, such a program can be successful.

Home study may take less time than a traditional classroom, leaving time for opportunities to explore the local culture that can be an education in itself. It is helpful if parents arrange for children to participate in scouting or other programs and encourage social interaction with other children. They may be able to organize team sports or individual sport lessons, plus informal social gatherings with other children.

The education allowance provides for home study instead of the school at post education allowance and reimburses the employee for the costs of home study instruction within amounts established for this type of instruction (SR 274.12B). Note: while this allowance does not cover money for an instructor, it does cover the program's Advisory Teaching Service.

**The Calvert System** (K-8) is the elementary correspondence program used most widely by Foreign Service families. The course for each grade includes a detailed lesson manual for the course monitor and all necessary books, workbooks, and supplies. The Calvert School offers an Advisory Teaching Service that reviews monthly student tests and offers suggestions to instructors. If this optional service is used, the Calvert School can issue a certificate when a course has been satisfactorily completed and can furnish grade transcripts to other schools. By the 8th grade level, the Calvert System recognizes diverging interests and levels of achievement. A complete 8th grade program is available or a parent may choose to purchase a personal mix of individual courses suited to the child.

Many universities offer high school correspondence courses leading to a diploma. **The University of Nebraska - Lincoln Independent Study High School** has been used successfully by Foreign Service families over the years. Under this program, students must have a supervisor at post approved by the University of Nebraska Independent Study High School principal. Again, attention should be given to arranging peer group activities and cultural and sports opportunities.

**Supplementary instruction:** Some students may need tutoring or special classes to supplement their school programs. A supplementary instruction allowance is available if the school at post does not provide instruction in those academic subjects generally offered by U.S. public schools (e.g., U.S. history, civics, American literature, computer instruction, or English grammar) or if the school instructs in a foreign language that the child does not know well enough to progress in the curriculum. A supplementary instruction allowance is also available to provide for the child who requires additional instruction in order to enter a grade or remain in the same grade in the school at post. Families may pool their allowances to pay a tutor to teach a course. Supplementary instruction must be provided by someone other than

a member of the child's family, and the child must be enrolled in an established school at post (SR 276.9).

**Tutorial school:** Sometimes, American parents place their children in a local school to benefit from its socio-cultural experiences, group activities, and courses. At the same time, they establish a tutorial school to offer courses needed to supplement the local curriculum. The post must apply for a revision of the education allowance to meet the combined local and tutorial school fees. A/OS can provide assistance to parents considering this option.

**Establishing an American school:** As an alternative to either home study or a tutorial school supplementing a local school, it may be possible for parents to establish an American school. Such a school could be open to other nationalities as well. The community must organize a school association and school board with a constitution and bylaws. The post should apply for an at post education allowance as well as an assistance grant from the Department of State. One advantage of establishing a school is that it can provide an official record of subjects and hours completed by the students. Parents interested in this option should contact the Office of Overseas Schools, A/OS.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from  
Calvert School  
Department 2CAT  
105 Tuscany Road  
Baltimore, MD 21210  
Telephone: 410-243-6030

*Catalog of Home Instruction Courses, Grade K-8*

Available from  
University of Nebraska  
Nebraska Center for Continuing Education  
33rd and Holdrege Streets  
Lincoln, NE 68583-9800  
Telephone: 402-472-4321  
Fax: 402-472-1901

*College and High School Independent Study Bulletins*

Available from  
USDA Graduate Correspondence Program  
Room 1112, South Agriculture Building  
14th Street and Independence Avenue SW

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

Washington, DC 20250

*Correspondence Program Course Description*

Available from Peterson's Guides. See Chapter 5, page 18 for contact information.

*The Independent Study Catalog*

This is a guide to over 10,000 correspondence courses, including high school, college, and graduate study-at-home programs, plus external degree and certificate programs.

**EMBASSY/FAMILY/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP VIS-A-VIS SECURITY**

The security-related aspects of life overseas must be considered whether the children attend school at post or come periodically to visit. Children must fully understand the security situation and what measures they must take to protect themselves. Real communication must exist amongst the children, the parents, the Embassy, and the school administration on all security issues.

Americans have certain attitudes and practices concerning safety and security. They expect to have lifeguards at public pools, marked fire exits, fire drills in schools, and safety controls on the electrical appliances in their homes. When adapting to life overseas, Foreign Service personnel and their families must remain safety-conscious while recognizing that the new environment may have cultural differences to consider. For instance, use of seat belts and child restraint seats, mandatory in much of the United States, should not be abandoned abroad because no one else does it. Good safety habits should be continued and taught to children - no matter what the local customs may be.

In addition to safety habits and practices, active preparation for emergency situations is another element of protection. Embassy or consulate security officers will provide information on special security matters and crisis procedures at post. Effective communication should be established among families, the Embassy, and the school community. Parents should share security information with their children in a non-threatening, open way at regular intervals - not just at the time of crisis. Planning and practicing responses to a crisis situation can provide a psychological inoculation. When the crisis occurs, helpful rather than negative or inappropriate responses are available.

**SECURITY PREPARATION**

Parents can take the following security precautions:

- Attend the Security Overseas Seminar at the Foreign Service Institute and include their children. During the summer, there are special segments of this seminar for elementary and high school students.

- Adapt the good safety attitudes and practices already followed in the United States to the cultural and political environment of the post, following post recommendations and guidance.
- Attend post security briefings with teenage children. If teens are not permitted to attend regular briefings, ask that a special briefing be arranged for them. Also request that briefings be arranged for visiting college and boarding school students.
- Discuss security briefings at family meetings. Regularly practice drills with a role for each family member. Discuss what each one will do if an emergency occurs during school hours.
- Ask the school principal or administrator about plans for dealing with different crises - a school bus breaking down, a bomb threat at school, a demonstration outside the school grounds, or violence in another part of town. How will parents be notified? Where will the children go?
- Make arrangements with a friend or neighbor to assume responsibility for children caught at home in an emergency and cut off from parents.
- Provide children with emergency information including home and office telephone numbers and the telephone number of a family friend who can be reached in an emergency. Consider a badge system for younger children containing this important information. Teach children how to use the two-way radio.
- Make sure that both the Embassy and the school have on file a parent authorization form for medical treatment in case the parent is absent.
- Give teenagers clear instructions about what to do in a crisis if they are away from home, school, or the Mission. Make sure you know what is required or recommended by the Mission or the local authorities.
- Make sure children know exactly what to do if they are stopped by authorities - what information they need to produce, what telephone numbers to call, how to behave.
- If a child attends a host country school, make sure that you and the school understand the arrangements for mutual notification and exchange of information about the child.
- Make thoughtful arrangements for children in advance for potential post evacuation.

An essential aspect of preparing for crisis situations is to understand the normal emotional and behavioral responses that will occur. Denying emotions in a time of crisis inhibits effective functioning. On the other hand, recognizing the emotional reactions to a dreaded situation seems to bring about a greater tolerance for any difficulties.

Crisis situations bring on immediate, rapid, and significant changes in thought and feeling. Initially, people may feel disorganized and confused. They may have feelings of

heightened vulnerability accompanied by considerable internal tension and anxiety. People caught up in a crisis usually have a lowered level of self-esteem. They feel some sense of threat to their physical and/or emotional integrity and wonder if they can survive the challenge presented by the crisis. Individuals and families in crisis may experience heightened fear, anxiety, tension, sorrow, anger, and irritability. Children may revert to an earlier behavior. For the young child, this may be loss of toilet control, night terrors, whining and clinging, or unwillingness to let a parent out of sight. For the school child, it may appear as refusal to attend school, withdrawal, loss of interest, irritability, or unusual fears.

Family members should be aware of how stress affects others in the family and what can relieve it. Although a broad prescription for stress is rest, proper nutrition, and exercise, it is important to understand ahead of time what works for your family members, so that you will be able to take care of yourself and them under extraordinary conditions. It is important to know that caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs have a strong negative effect during times of stress and should be avoided. Sharing concerns during a crisis can have a positive effect. Children sense stress in parents and will often react to a crisis in a way similar to the way their parents react.

## **RESOURCES**

For the following resources, contact the Community Liaison Office at post or the Family Liaison Office. See ch 1, p 4 for contact information.

*Parenting in a Stressful World*, paper produced for the Direct Communication Project  
*Raising Children Abroad*, 1994, videotape produced by the Family Liaison Office

## **CHAPTER 6 THE FOREIGN SERVICE CHILD IN THE WASHINGTON AREA: SCHOOLING OPTIONS**

*For many Foreign Service families, a move to Washington means making difficult choices. A new house may have to be found, a new job settled into, a new lifestyle may have to be determined. Choosing from among the wide array of options of appropriate day care for younger children or schools for the older ones can be a complex and time-consuming chore. Parents need to examine their own basic values, their child-rearing and educational philosophies, and each child's needs when making decisions that will affect their child's future.*

*There are over 500 public schools and close to 350 independent schools in the Washington area. Parents must choose from among this array of school options the one which offers the best program for each child in the family. It would be overwhelming to try to consider every single option, but this is really not necessary. A novice to the Washington scene should study some maps, talk to friends and neighbors, assess the financial implications, visit neighborhoods, and look at possible schools. Families may also wish to consult the Family Liaison Office Education and Youth Officer after narrowing their options.*

*Families returning to the Washington area from overseas can do some of this homework before they arrive using education information available in the Community Liaison Office or Personnel Office at post. The Washingtonian and the Washington newspapers, if available, are also good resources. Families can write to prospective school districts and area real estate agents for information.*

### **CHOOSING AN ELEMENTARY OR SECONDARY SCHOOL**

For many parents, choosing the best schools for their children determines other life choices. Newcomers usually investigate the public school systems thoroughly before selecting an area in which to settle. Standardized test scores, and, for high schools, the number of National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists and the percentage of students continuing their education after high school are among the tools used to evaluate school districts and individual schools. At the high school level, programs of study offering Advanced Placements courses or the International Baccalaureate Program can also be an indication of demanding academics. Each school district determines its own curriculum, requirements, and special programs. However, individual schools within a district can differ because of variations in student bodies, individual principals and teachers, and parental involvement. Home environment, parents' expectations for their children, and parental involvement in schools also seem to contribute a great deal to a school's excellence. Neighborhoods with higher income levels and percentage of parents with college educations generally have schools with better test scores and a larger percentage of students going on to college. Real Estate agents are a source of information in this area.

In comparing school districts and individual schools within each district, the following general questions should be asked:

- Is the physical plant of the school adequate and secure?
- Does the school district provide a choice of out-of-neighborhood or magnet schooling (special arts or science, bilingual schools)? Is student transportation to the alternative schools available?
- What is the school's teacher/student ratio?
- What teaching methods (traditional, open classroom, team-teaching, etc.) are used? Observe classes if possible.
- What art and music programs are offered?
- Do teachers have advanced degrees in their field or only the required education courses? Are they encouraged or required to do periodic in-service training?
- What are the special education facilities and programs in each school/jurisdiction?
- Is homework given and, if so, how much each night?
- Is there an adequate sports program?
- What extracurricular clubs and interest groups exist?
- Parents of elementary school children should ask other questions:
- Can a young child walk to school safely without crossing main roads?
- Is transportation available by bus or carpool?
- Are there teachers' aides?
- Is there sufficient space for recreation and adequate playground supervision?
- Are there after-school and extended day programs? For working parents, this consideration can be as important as locating good child care.

All Washington area high schools publish school profiles which describe enrollment, graduation requirements, grading system, curriculum, services available, and special courses offered. In general, all schools in a jurisdiction provide the same core curricular offerings, except alternative or magnet schools. Profiles can be requested from the individual school system. Information, including addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers, of the most commonly used jurisdictions can be found in this chapter. The FLO Direct Communication Project Paper No. 1, *Washington Area Schools: Admission Requirements, Programs of Interest and Private Schools*, is available from the Family Liaison Office in Washington and from Community Liaison Offices or Administrative Offices overseas.

Parents can use school profiles and interviews with principals or counselors to answer the following questions:

- Does the school have a good orientation program for new students?
- What courses are included in the basic curriculum?

- What elective courses are available?
- What Advanced Placement courses are offered?
- Is there an International Baccalaureate Program?
- Is there vocational education for those students wishing to take a trade, skill or career course?
- How have students scored recently on standardized tests, the National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test (NMSQT), the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), Advanced Placement (AP) exams?
- What percentage of high school students go to college? What colleges do graduates attend? How are college and career counseling handled?

### ***WASHINGTON AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS***

Washington area public schools most used by Foreign Service families include the following: the District of Columbia; Anne Arundel County, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County in Maryland; Alexandria City, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Falls Church City, Loudoun County, Prince William County, and Stafford County in Virginia. Some families use schools as far out as Calvert County in Maryland and Fauquier County in Virginia.

Many educational services and programs are available in the Washington area. Foreign Service families look for the following at public schools or specialized private schools: remedial tutoring; psychological services; programs for the physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped; programs for highly gifted and learning-disabled students; English as a Second (or Foreign) Language programs; student employment services; extensive science and sport programs; and career and vocational counseling. Some schools have reading and math labs which enable students to work in specific skill areas when difficulties arise. These labs may also be geared for the talented student who needs the challenge of additional advanced study. Parents are usually encouraged to participate in academic programs, and, upon request, students and parents may receive individual counseling when problems arise.

### ***ATTENDING SCHOOL OUTSIDE ONE'S LEGAL RESIDENCE***

Each jurisdiction in the Washington area has regulations about children living in one jurisdiction and attending school in another. In most jurisdictions, children who do not reside within the boundaries of that jurisdiction must pay tuition. Foreign Service students temporarily living with friends or relatives while their parents are stationed overseas must

pay out-of-county tuition in most districts. This is true even if the living arrangement is temporary as when a family is waiting to move into their permanent home. Parents may want to consider choosing temporary housing in the same jurisdiction that they plan to settle in permanently. Maryland counties handle each situation on a case-by-case basis and will often permit a child to attend classes if the parent can prove they are about to move permanently into the county. Fairfax County in Virginia, however, has strict guidelines and makes few exceptions. Contact the Office of Community Relations or Information of the school district for specific policies. Addresses and telephone numbers are listed later in this chapter.

In the District of Columbia, parents who wish their children to attend a District school other than the school to which their neighborhood is assigned must apply each year between February and April. Transfer requests are accepted from October 1 to April 30 of the preceding school year and are generally awarded on a space-available basis. Several thousand transfer requests are processed by the D.C. school system each year, with justifications ranging from economic hardship or inconvenience to a desire for a child to take a particular class or program, or to be in a school with high test scores. Admission to Banneker High School and the Duke Ellington School of Arts is on a competitive basis.

## ***PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS***

**All Washington area school systems require an original birth certificate for the child, inoculations for polio, DPT, measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), a physical exam, proof of residence (house contract, lease agreement, or resident manager's letter), and documentation of previous educational program. Many also require a TB test, within the previous 30 days. Families may want to consider delaying medical clearance exams, which include the TB test, until arrival in the Washington area so that children do not have to repeat the test.**

The following information is intended to be used as a guideline. Because this type of information, especially telephone numbers and addresses, may change, you should contact the school system directly or contact the Family Liaison Office for the most recent information.

### ***DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA***

District of Columbia law requires children to attend private or public schools from age 5 to age 18.

**School starting age:** 5 years by December 31 for Kindergarten

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten programs at some schools
- Some extended day care programs for elementary students through D.C. Government Health and Human Services program
- Spanish language immersion at Oyster Elementary School
- Magnet programs at some elementary and middle schools
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Magnet high schools: Duke Ellington School of Performing Arts, School Without Walls, Banneker Academic High School, Bell Multicultural High School
- International studies program at Woodrow Wilson High School
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Communications Office  
415 12th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Telephone: 202-724-4044  
Fax: 202-724-8664

**MARYLAND**

***ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by December 31 for kindergarten

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten at some schools
- Extended day care program
- Half-day vocational and technical programs and two Centers of Applied Technology
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Mentor program with U.S. Naval Academy professors for selected juniors and seniors
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Superintendent of Schools  
Anne Arundel County Public Schools  
2644 Riva Road  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: 410-222-5303  
Fax: 410-222-5602

***HOWARD COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by December 31 for kindergarten

**School options/programs:**

- Gifted and talented program
- Vocational education
- Work-study programs
- Special technical programs at Howard County School of Technology
- Gifted and talented programs
- Advanced Placement courses
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Public Information Office  
Howard County Public School  
10910 Route 108  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
Telephone: 410-313-6682  
Fax: 410-313-6833

***MONTGOMERY COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by December 31

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten programs
- Full-day kindergarten programs at some schools
- Extended day care at some schools
- Vocational high school center (Edison Career Center)
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses

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Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

- International Baccalaureate program at Richard Montgomery High School
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Department of Information  
 Montgomery County Public Schools  
 850 Hungerford Drive  
 Rockville, MD 20850  
 Telephone: 301-279-3391  
 Fax: 301-279-3221

***PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by December 31 for kindergarten

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten program
- Full-day kindergarten at some schools
- Extended day care
- French immersion program at Shadyside and Rogers Heights Elementary Schools
- Two vocational high schools
- Evening high school program
- Gifted and talented (TAG) program
- Advanced Placement courses
- International Baccalaureate programs at Central, Laurel, Parkdale, and Suitland High Schools
- Magnet programs in elementary, middle, and high schools
- Advanced Science and Technology Centers at Eleanor Roosevelt and Oxon Hill High Schools
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Office of Public Affairs  
 14201 School Lane  
 Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
 Telephone: 301-952-6001  
 Fax: 301-952-1383

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA**

Family Liaison Office  
 Room 1212A  
 Department of State  
 Washington, DC 20520

Virginia Law requires children to attend a private or public school from age 5 to age 17.

### ***CITY OF ALEXANDRIA***

**School starting age:** 5 years by September 30

**School options/programs:**

- Limited pre-kindergarten program
- Some full-day kindergartens
- Extended day care
- Spanish immersion program at John Adams Elementary School
- Vocational program at T. C. Williams High School
- Gifted and talented classes
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Studies Diploma
- Magnet school for math and science at Cora Kelly High School, entry by lottery
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Department of Communications  
2000 North Beauregard  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
Telephone: 703-824-6635  
Fax: 703-824-6699

### ***ARLINGTON COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by September 30

**School options/programs:**

- Montessori preschool centers for 3- and 4-year-old children
- Full-day kindergarten at some schools
- Extended day care at all elementary schools
- Spanish partial immersion programs at Key-Taylor-Jamestown Elementary Team Schools, Abingdon and Oakridge Elementary Schools, and Williamsburg Middle School
- Secondary Schools Career Center and Vocational Training
- Gifted and talented program at all schools

- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Studies Program
- International Baccalaureate program at Washington-Lee High School, beginning in 1996-97 school year
- Eligible for Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology
- Two alternative elementary schools, one offering a self-contained, teacher-directed, 3Rs education and the other offering an open classroom, team-taught, experimental education; apply in January for lottery selection
- Alternative middle and high school program at H.B. Woodlawn for mature, focused, self-directed students; apply in January for lottery selection

**For further information:**

Community Service Department  
 1426 North Quincy Street  
 Arlington, VA 22207  
 Telephone: 703-358-6005  
 Fax: 703-358-7640

***FAIRFAX COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by September 30

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten program
- Extended day care
- Partial immersion language programs in Spanish, French, German, and Japanese at thirteen elementary schools
- Elementary magnet schools at Bailey's and Hunters Woods Elementary Schools for the Arts and Sciences
- Vocational education
- Work-study program
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Study diploma
- International Baccalaureate programs at Stuart and Mt. Vernon High Schools
- Thomas Jefferson High School of Science & Technology, with entry by competition
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Family Liaison Office  
 Room 1212A  
 Department of State  
 Washington, DC 20520

Office of Community Relations & Office of Superintendent  
10700 Page Avenue  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Telephone: 703-246-2991  
Fax: 703-246-2024

### ***CITY OF FALLS CHURCH***

**School starting age:** 5 years by September 30

**School options/programs:**

- Full-day kindergartens
- Extended day care
- Vocational education
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Study diploma
- International Baccalaureate program at George Mason High School (accepts out-of-city students on tuition basis)
- Summer enrichment program

**For further information:**

Public Information  
7124 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22043  
Telephone: 703-241-7600  
Fax: 703-241-7613

### ***LOUDOUN COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by September 30 for kindergarten

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten
- Extended day care
- Alternative School for students with difficulty adjusting to a regular school
- Vocational and technical programs
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Study diploma

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Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

- Eligible for Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology
- Summer school

**For further information:**

Public Information Office  
 Loudoun County Public Schools  
 102 North Street NW  
 Leesburg, VA 22075  
 Telephone: 703-771-6440  
 Fax: 703-771-6575

***PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY***

**School Starting age:** 5 years by September 30

**School options/programs:**

- Pre-kindergarten
- Extended day care in selected schools
- Spanish language immersion at Henderson Elementary
- Vocational education program
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Study diploma
- International Baccalaureate offered at Stonewall Jackson High School
- Eligible for Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology
- Summer school program

**For further information:**

Community Relations Office  
 Prince William County Public Schools  
 PO Box 389  
 Manassas, VA 22110  
 Telephone: 703-791-8720  
 Fax: 703-791-8842

***STAFFORD COUNTY***

**School starting age:** 5 years by September 30

**School options/programs:**

Family Liaison Office  
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 Washington, DC 20520

- Head Start program
- Full-day kindergarten
- Vocational education
- Work-study program
- Gifted and talented program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Advanced Study Diploma
- Summer program

**For further information:**

Superintendent of Schools  
 Stafford County Public Schools  
 1729 Jefferson Davis Highway  
 Stafford, VA 22554  
 Telephone: 703-659-3141  
 Fax: 703-659-6341

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR WASHINGTON-AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Note: Graduation requirements for students in magnet programs may differ from the general requirements of the jurisdiction.**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Students must earn a minimum of 23.5 credits including:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 3.5 Social studies - world history and geography, U.S. history and government, and D.C. history and government
- 1.5 Health and physical education
- 2 Foreign language
- 0.5 Art
- 0.5 Music
- 1 Career and vocational education
- 1 Life skills
- 3.5 Electives
- + Plus 100 hours of community service

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*The State of Maryland has established minimum reading, writing, math, and citizenship skills; all students in Maryland schools must pass basic competency tests in those areas (first tested in Grade 9 except for citizenship in Grade 10) in addition to the graduation requirements listed below for each county. All students must also attend 4 years beyond the 8th grade, and of the 22 unit graduation requirement, 4 units must be taken beyond Grade 11.*

*In order to earn a Maryland High School Certificate of Merit, graduates must have included at least one foreign language, and a total of three science credits. Twelve of the credits must be advanced credits, and students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.*

**Note: Graduation requirements for students in magnet programs may differ from the general requirements of the jurisdiction.**

### ***ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits including:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 3 Social studies - U.S. history, U.S. government, and world history
- 1 Health and physical education
- 2 Foreign language
- 1 Fine arts
- 1 Basic technology
- 6 Electives
- + Plus community service hours

### ***HOWARD COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 20 credits including:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 3 Social studies - American government, U.S. history, and world history
- 1 Physical education
- 1 Fine arts
- 1 Technology education, home economics, vocational education, or computer studies
- 5 Electives
- + Plus complete three instructional activities for the World of Work program:  
creating an individual career plan, participating in a simulated job interview, and preparing a resume

### ***MONTGOMERY COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits including:

- 4 English
- 4 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 3 Social studies - U.S. history, world history, plus national, state and local government
- 1.5 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts
- 1 Technology education
- + Plus 2 credits of foreign language or 2 credits of advanced technology education or successful completion of state-approved career development programs of 3-9 credits.
- + Plus 60 hours of community service

### ***PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 21 credits including:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 3 Social studies
- 1 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts
- 2 Technology education *or*
- 2 Foreign language
- + And electives to equal 21 credits
- + Plus meet a community service requirement

### **VIRGINIA**

***Statewide literacy testing in reading, mathematics, and writing is given to students in grade 6 and each succeeding spring until all areas are passed; students must pass all the tests before moving on to 9th grade. For those students returning to Virginia after 9th grade, the test must be passed before the student will be allowed to graduate in the State of Virginia. All graduates must also take Virginia History and Government.***

**Note: Graduation requirements for students in magnet programs may differ slightly from the general requirements of the jurisdiction.**

### ***CITY OF ALEXANDRIA***

Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits including:

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- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 3 Social studies
- 1 Health and physical education
- 1 Family life education
- 1 Fine arts or vocational education
- 7 Electives

***ARLINGTON COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 21 credits including:

- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 1 Math or science
- 3 Social studies - world history, Virginia and U.S. history, and Virginia and U.S. government
- 2 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts or practical arts
- 6 Electives

***FAIRFAX COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 21 credits including:

- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 1 Math or science
- 3 Social studies - world studies, U.S. history and government, and Virginia history and government
- 2 Health and physical education
- 1 Foreign language or social studies elective
- 1 Fine arts or practical arts
- 5 Electives

***CITY OF FALLS CHURCH***

Students must earn a minimum of 21 credits including:

- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 1 Math or science
- 3 Social studies - world studies, U.S. and Virginia history, and U.S. and Virginia

- government
- 2 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts or practical arts
- 6 Electives

***LOUDOUN COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 21 credits including:

- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 1 Math or science
- 3 Social studies - world history or geography, U.S. and Virginia history, and U.S. and Virginia government
- 2 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts or practical arts

***PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits including:

- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 3 Social studies
- 2 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts or practical arts
- 1 Family life education
- 6 Electives

***STAFFORD COUNTY***

Students must earn a minimum of 21 credits including:

- 4 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 2 Science
- 1 Math or Science
- 3 Social studies - world geography, U.S. history and government, and Virginia history and government
- 2 Health and physical education
- 1 Fine arts or practical arts
- 6 Electives

**SELECTING AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL**

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Private schooling can offer advantages to the Foreign Service child. In many cases, the independent school more closely resembles the overseas school experience. Classes are usually smaller, children may receive more individual attention, and college-bound students are given more personalized counseling. Schools sponsored by religious organizations are often less costly than other independent schools, but their classes tend to be larger.

Because there are close to 350 independent schools in the Washington area, finding the best possible match for a child's individual needs and goals requires time and patience. The Family Liaison Office Education and Youth Officer can provide information, initial counseling, and focus. Parents can then call or write the individual schools for more information. Private, independent education consultants in the Washington area provide comprehensive counseling, testing, and school placement. Parents should look for a consultant who is a member of the U.S.-wide Independent Education Consultants Association (IECA) or the Washington-based Association of Consultants and Counselors for Educational Services and Support (ACCESS). For additional guidance on selection of a consultant, contact the Family Liaison Office's Education and Youth Officer.

Students interested in private schools should begin the application process early as the most competitive schools have February deadlines. Since many of the most selective schools require interviews, families abroad should consider scheduling interviews during home leave or R&R trips even before a formal application is made. Some private schools require the SSAT (see Ch 3, p 20) while others accept the PSAT or have their own test for applicants. It is unwise to apply to only one school. Because of space limitations, many bright children are denied entrance to the more popular schools. Some Catholic schools give priority to families that are members of the parish. Applying to four or five schools should prevent disappointment.

## **RESOURCES**

### **ACCESS**

9 Potomac Court  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Telephone: 703-683-7764

Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW)  
PO Box 9956  
Washington, DC 20016  
Telephone: 202-537-1114  
AISGW will provide a directory of member schools.

Catholic Schools Office  
Archdiocese of Washington  
P.O. Box 29260  
Washington, DC 20017

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Telephone: 301-853-4518

Fax: 301-853-7670

This office will provide a directory of Catholic schools in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

Catholic Schools Office

Archdiocese of Arlington

200 N. Glebe Road

Arlington, VA 22203

Telephone: 703-841-2519

Fax: 703-524-5028

This office will provide a list of Catholic schools in Northern Virginia.

Montessori Institute

2119 S Street NW

Washington, DC 20008

Telephone: 202-387-8020

A teacher-training organization, the Institute does not recommend individual schools, but will provide a current list of Montessori schools in the Washington area.

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

1620 L Street NW

Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: 202-833-4757 or 1-800-541-5908

NAIS will provide a directory of boarding schools.

Available from Community Liaison Offices overseas or the Family Liaison Office in Washington. See Chapter 1, page 4 for contact information.

*Shopping for Elementary and Secondary Schools from Washington Consumers' Checkbook*, Volume 9, Number 1, 1994

Articles on education from the November *Washingtonian* each year

Available from Independent Education Consultants Association (IECA)

4085 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 401

Fairfax, VA 22030

Toll free telephone: 1-800-808-IECA

*Choosing the Right School for Your Child*

Available from

Independent School Guides

7315 Brookville Road

Family Liaison Office

Room 1212A

Department of State

Washington, DC 20520

Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Telephone: 301-986-5370

*Independent School Guide: Washington, DC and Surrounding Area*

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents in the United States need to be as involved in their children's school as they were while stationed overseas. The information on parent/teacher conferences, serving on school boards, and volunteering in the classroom (see Ch 5 p ?) is relevant for all parents.

## **ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS**

There are two alternative ways for older teens and adults to get an American high school diploma: the General Educational Development (GED) testing program and an external diploma program. For information on the external diploma program, see Ch 17, p 5.

The GED testing program is for people who once were enrolled in school, but did not complete requirements for high school graduation. The GED provides certification of a high school diploma equivalent for employment or college admission purposes. Many U.S. school districts offer preparation classes for students planning to take the GED.

The GED tests consist of a battery of five comprehensive examinations in writing skills, social studies, natural sciences, mathematics, and interpreting literature and arts. Emphasis is on intellectual ability rather than on detailed knowledge of content.

The tests take approximately 1 day to complete. Each state has different eligibility requirements for residency and age. Usually one must be at least 18 years old, but in Maryland the age is 17. For information or to arrange to take the GED, contact the appropriate school system.

Many GED preparation books and software programs are available in libraries and bookstores. A television series carried by both cable television and many public television stations in the United States provides a good general preparation for the test. The official GED practice tests (English, Spanish, large print, and audio visual versions) can be ordered from the publisher:

Steck-Vaughn Company  
P.O. Box 26015  
Austin, TX 78755  
Call toll free: 1-800-531-5015

The GED tests may also be taken overseas. Test-takers must not be currently enrolled in school and must be at least 18 years old. A test administrator must be found who agrees to accept the responsibility for properly safeguarding, administering, and returning all restricted testing materials to the GED Testing Service. The administrator could be the cultural affairs officer, the principal of an American school, the director of a Ministry of Education, or a

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

degreed instructor at a school or university. The administrator requests the test from the GED Test Center by submitting the appropriate fee which is paid by the testee(s). The test is sent to the examiner who administers it and returns the completed test to the GED Test Center for marking. If the GED is passed overseas, a diploma may be requested from either New Jersey or Iowa, the only two states that do not require residence. More information about taking the GED overseas can be obtained from the following address:

GED Testing Service  
Overseas Civilian Testing  
#1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 250  
Washington, DC 20036-1193  
Telephone: 202-939-9490  
Fax: 202-775-8578

## **RESOURCES**

Available from  
Barron's Educational Series, Inc.  
250 Wireless Boulevard  
Hauppauge, NY 11788  
Telephone: 516-434-3311

*How to Prepare for the New High School Equivalency Examination: How to Pass the GED*

Available from  
Scott, Foresman and Company  
1900 East Lake Avenue  
Glenview, IL, 60025  
Telephone: 708-729-3000

*Passing the GED: A Complete Preparation Program for the High School Equivalency Examination*

## **CHAPTER 7 CHILD CARE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL**

*In the Foreign Service, as in American society in general, child care is an increasing concern. For those families with single parents or two parents working outside the home, it is important to give serious thought to the arrangements for children before and after school.*

*The information in this chapter will be helpful to families assigned to Washington as they look at their options and decide what will work best for them. Because the options overseas will differ drastically from one post to the next, it is important to research posts individually. The Composite Child Care Report, published annually by the Family Liaison Office, contains post-specific information that may be helpful, especially at the bidding stage. Once an assignment has been accepted, families should contact the CLO at post for the most current information.*

### **EXTENDED DAY CARE PROGRAMS**

Many school districts provide care for school-aged children before and after the regular school day. The care may be provided in public schools, centers, or private homes. Fees charged for this service are on a sliding scale based on family income. Before-school programs are typically open from 7:15 a.m. to the opening of school. After-school programs are open from the closing of school to 6:15 p.m. Some schools have optional after-school programs for kindergartners. In some school districts, the school-aged child care program is heavily subscribed, and there are waiting lists during both the academic year and the summer. Parents must learn the registration dates for each semester and apply early. Not all school-aged child care programs are open during school vacations, and parents must make alternate arrangements for these times. For more information about these programs, contact the school offices listed in Chapter 6.

Recreation departments in each area offer after-school recreation and sports programs, often in conjunction with school programs. Transportation is not provided, and children are free to come and go without parental permission. Each recreation department publishes a newsletter listing its activities. See Ch 9, pp 2 - 5 for the addresses and telephone numbers of the recreation departments if you are interested in more information or want to request a newsletter.

In addition, other groups in the Washington area offer after-school, weekend, and vacation activities for children ages 9-14. The YMCA, YWCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs offer a variety of sports and arts and crafts programs which may be on a walk-in or scheduled basis. The regional offices of the Boy Scouts of America, the Girls Scouts, and the Camp Fire Boys and Girls can provide information about local activities including crafts, trips, vocational awareness, and service projects. Other possibilities include environmental education programs offered by the Audubon Naturalist Society and volunteer programs for young people sponsored by the American Red Cross and the National Zoo.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***American Red Cross***

Information: 202-737-8300

### ***Audubon Naturalist Society***

8940 Jones Mill Road  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Telephone: 301-652-9188

### ***Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington***

There are several locations throughout the Washington area. See the yellow pages for listings.

### ***Boy Scouts of America, National Capitol Area Council***

Wisconsin Avenue and Cedar Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Telephone: 301-530-9360

### ***Camp Fire Boys and Girls, Potomac Area Council***

P.O. Box 7598  
Arlington, VA 22207  
Telephone: 703-569-1686

### ***Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capitol***

2233 Wisconsin Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Telephone: 202-337-4300

### ***National Zoo***

3001 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Telephone: 202-357-1300

### ***YMCA Headquarters***

1625 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202-232-6700

### ***YWCA Headquarters***

624 - 9th Street NW

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Washington, DC 20001  
Telephone: 202-626-0700

### **LATCHKEY CHILDREN**

The decision to allow children to stay home alone after school or to stay alone during the day is a difficult one. The Fairfax County Department of Social Services suggests 10 years as the minimum age for leaving children alone for *limited* hours. However, children differ greatly in their ability to care for themselves and each family situation is unique.

As a result of their experience, many latchkey children become more responsible and independent and less susceptible to peer pressure. They have an opportunity to devote themselves to a favorite interest or hobby. They can be of great assistance to their parents, caring for younger children, doing chores, and preparing dinner. However, if the child is nervous or insecure, or if the home situation is not completely safe, parents should look for an alternative solution.

#### **Have a Safety Plan**

Parents need to establish a structure and safety rules for their children's after-school hours:

- Work out an arrangement with a trusted neighbor who is at home during the day to whom the child can turn in an emergency.
- Put all emergency telephone numbers, including the parent's work number and the trusted neighbor's number, in a prominent place near the telephone.
- Make sure the child calls a parent to check in at a specified time. The work number should be memorized and written on a piece of paper carried by the child.
- Teach the child to answer the telephone without giving away that s/he is alone and not to open the door to a stranger.
- Teach the child how to turn the thermostat up and down.
- Make sure that all locks are working properly and that the child knows how to check and secure windows and doors.
- Explain that if any person does something that makes the child feel uncomfortable, s/he should tell you about it right away - even if it was supposed to be a secret.
- Talk with your child often about the child's worries when s/he is alone.
- Work out the child's responsibilities. Establish clear rules about pets, TV, visits from friends, homework, and chores.
- Prepare the child for emergencies: how to call the police or the fire department, what to do if ill or injured, if the toilet overflows, if the lights go out, if there is bad weather after school, if they miss the school bus, or if a fire starts.

Parents can make their child feel more secure by calling regularly, by leaving notes to greet the child and remind him/her of things that must be done, by providing materials

needed to complete homework and for arts and craft activities, and by making sure the child has books, puzzles, hobby materials, and games for entertainment.

## **CHAPTER 8 BOARDING SCHOOLS: MAKING THE CHOICE**

*Most Foreign Service parents still expect their children to live at home until college. This is not always possible, because a number of posts lack adequate high schools and sometimes even junior high or elementary school facilities. In a typical year, approximately 450 Foreign Service children attend 150 boarding schools in the United States and abroad. Because the boarding school option means early separation from parents, it is very important that the child be actively included in the decision-making process. Parents considering assignment to a post with inadequate schooling should consider the following advantages and disadvantages of a boarding school.*

### **ADVANTAGES OF A BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION**

- The student's self-reliance and independence are bolstered.
- Educational and social continuity is provided for the student whose family anticipates a change in assignment/location.
- Students are provided with regular supervised study periods.
- The community atmosphere can foster relationships between students and faculty/staff and among students themselves that are closer than at a day school.
- Students can be academically challenged through extensive course offerings, high achievement standards, and a favorable faculty/student ratio.
- A variety of extracurricular and athletic programs allow choices that suit individual tastes.
- Rules and regulations provide a defined frame of reference for the student to adapt to away-from-home living before encountering the relative freedom of most college campuses.
- Community and school service programs provide students with volunteer and work opportunities.

### **DISADVANTAGES OF A BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION**

- The student is physically separated from parents and siblings.
- The student must adjust to another set of new circumstances and surroundings.
- Academic demands often exceed those of public and local overseas schools.
- Students have less free time. Extracurricular activities and athletic events fill up the student's hours after classes and on Saturdays.
- Rules and regulations are universal in order to meet the needs of a wide range of youngsters and are relatively stringent with expulsion for minor infractions.
- Paying job opportunities for older teens are usually not available.

- Students sometimes take on inappropriate advisory roles with their peers.

### ***AT HOME OR ABROAD?***

Once the decision has been made to send a child to boarding school, the next consideration is location. The apprehension involved in sending a child far from family can be so overwhelming that a U.S. boarding school may not even be considered. However, making a wise choice means considering all the alternatives.

### ***ADVANTAGES OF BOARDING SCHOOLS ABROAD***

Choosing a boarding school near the post of assignment will increase the possibility of visits to family, reduce travel time and cost, and lessen family or student anxiety over separation distance. Overseas boarding schools offer an international and intercultural setting. Interesting field trips are a regular part of the curriculum often enhancing foreign language facility. Common bonds of overseas experience can lessen the Foreign Service child's initial feelings of detachment from peers and can provide an important building block for new friendships. Most students in foreign boarding schools come from an international setting. In addition, students who do well at an international school have college admission advantages, because the experience adds a unique dimension to their accomplishments. It should be noted that most international schools abroad do not offer programs for children with special learning needs.

### ***ADVANTAGES OF BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES***

Choosing a boarding school in the United States means a greater selection of schools and programs. Some schools offer as many as 250 courses to meet the needs of the intellectually curious student. Some schools have special education and remedial facilities. U.S. boarding schools usually have more extensive extracurricular programs and weekend programs. Volunteer community work is commonly encouraged. Financial aid is more often available. It is easier for families to visit U.S. campuses prior to admission. The socio-economic diversity of the student bodies is greater than at most international boarding schools. Students can more easily visit relatives and friends during school holidays. Legislation passed in 1994 permits the education allowance to cover travel costs within the United States. Students point out the advantages of reentering U.S. culture in the "protected" environment of a U.S. boarding school. Finally, U.S. colleges and universities are closer for visits and interviews.

## **CHOOSING A BOARDING SCHOOL**

Once the decision is made to put a child in boarding school, the family is then faced with the task of choosing the right school. Because there are over 300 boarding schools in the United States and abroad, it is necessary to narrow the field to a manageable group. This can be done by focusing on basic considerations about the type of school that will meet the child's needs, skills, and goals.

The first step is to gather information. Carefully look through one or more of the boarding school guides listed below. Most are available in public libraries in the United States. Every CLO office overseas receives an annual *Boarding School Directory* plus other useful material. The Family Liaison Office Education and Youth Officer regularly visits boarding schools, maintains a collection of boarding school catalogs and videos, and can make suggestions of appropriate boarding schools.

The next step is to call or write for application packets from approximately ten schools. Keep in mind that the school catalog always presents the institution favorably. Other publications such as course description booklets, student handbooks, financial aid information, alumni magazines, and recent editions of the school newspaper or literary magazine will give a closer view of the school and will clarify how well it matches the child's needs and skills.

## **MATCHING THE BOARDING SCHOOL TO THE CHILD**

Most boarding schools offer good, solid academic programs; however, they are geared to different types of student bodies. Some highly competitive schools (e.g., Andover, Exeter, Deerfield), with median SSAT scores in the 90th percentile, are looking for the highly motivated, independent student. Other schools take students with a range of abilities. Some are especially good at supporting underachievers; others stress the need for self-reliance and high motivation among entering students.

Several take mildly learning disabled students who are given special attention for an hour or two a day and mainstreamed the rest of the time. Most junior schools (for elementary and/or middle school students) are caring and give close academic and personal support to students.

Location is another important consideration. In addition to deciding if the child would be happier in an urban or rural environment, parents should consider whether the school is close to other adult family members or friends who could provide support. Keep in mind, however, that our children are often not as close to relatives as parents, particularly if family contact has been limited to home leaves. Convenient access to international airports will ease the student's travel logistics.

Besides looking at admission requirements, curriculum range, extracurricular activities, and the colleges frequently attended by graduates, parents should ask questions that will indicate whether the school offers support for the Foreign Service child and also fosters international thinking. The following questions may be appropriate:

- How many foreign and expatriate students are in the student body and how many students are from each country?
- Are there special orientation programs for new overseas students and continuing support during the year?
- Will the school assist with the logistics of vacations and travel?
- What is the range of weekend activities?
- Is there easy access to long distance telephone, e-mail, and fax?

Foreign Service families often need assistance in matching their children with appropriate schools. FLO's Education and Youth Officer can assist in this process and can also serve as a liaison between the overseas family and a U.S. school to facilitate admissions. The Education and Youth Officer can also refer families to a private educational consultant who can provide diagnostic services, short or long-term counseling, educational testing, and school placement for a fee. Parents can also contact the U.S.-wide Independent Education Consultants Association (IECA) or the Washington-based Association of Consultants and Counselors for Educational Services and Support (ACCESS) for a list of their members. See Chapter 6, pp 35 and 36 for contact information for these organizations.

The child's ability and achievement levels, the child's special interests and talents (sports, drama, music, computers, a desire for independent study) should be determined. Both parents and student should indicate desired school elements; structured or unstructured environment, large or small size, urban or rural setting, coeducational or not, proximity to relatives or to an international airport, emotional, academic, or logistical support, religious preference, and overall school costs. Families should not attempt to hide any information about the child in order to enhance chances of admission. To find an appropriate school, the Education and Youth Counselor, a consultant, and the school need to be able to see the whole child.

## **CAMPUS VISITS**

Once the choice of possible schools has been narrowed to a manageable number, visits to the campuses should be arranged if at all possible. School visits should be made before an application for admission is submitted. Ideally this would be done during the fall or winter preceding the student's enrollment and on a day when school is in session. Overnight visits in the dorms may sometimes be arranged. The prospective student greatly benefits from a firsthand look at the students, faculty, physical amenities, and prevailing atmosphere at the school. The visit is also an excellent opportunity to ask questions that were not answered by the school's written material and to engage in a candid exchange of opinions and concerns with school representatives. If the family is overseas, an interview should also be scheduled during the visit. Visiting a boarding school is very similar to visiting a college campus, which is discussed at length in Ch 13, p 18 of this book. Indeed, many families find

the college admission scenario easy after going through the boarding school admission process.

Many boarding schools offer summer programs which provide an excellent opportunity to find out if there is a "match" between school and student. Boarding school summer programs are discussed in Ch 9 p 12 of this book.

When applying to boarding schools, parents should assemble the following material:

- Transcripts for the child's current grade in school and for at least 1 previous academic year.
- Recent standardized test scores indicating a child's achievement levels in language arts, reading, math, social studies, science, etc. A discussion of these tests can be found in Chapter 3 of this book. Any other special test scores should also be included.
- The SSAT (or PSAT for older students), IQ or ability test scores (Otis Lennon, Stanford Binet, WISC-R, or similar) if they are available.
- Any documents or school recommendations that would further support a child's application or that would present evidence of a special need such as a learning disability.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from Peterson's Guides. See Ch 5, for contact information.

*Peterson's Private Secondary Schools*

Available from the Association of Boarding Schools.

1620 L Street NW

Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: 202-973-9700

Fax: 202-973-9790

*Boarding Schools Directory* (published annually)

Available from

Pathway Book Service

Avocus Publishing, Inc.

Lower Village

Gilsum, NH 03448

Telephone: 800-345-6665

*Casualties of Privilege: Essays on Prep Schools' Hidden Culture*

*Healthy Choices, Healthy Schools: The Residential Curriculum*

Available from

Vincent/Curtis

Family Liaison Office

Room 1212A

Department of State

Washington, DC 20520

224 Clarendon Street  
Boston, MA 02116-9912  
Telephone: 617-536-0100  
Fax: 617-536-8098

*The Educational Register*

Available from Porter Sargent's Publisher. See Ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

*The Handbook of Private Schools*

*Schools Abroad of Interest to Americans*

### **SPECIAL LOGISTICAL SUPPORT**

Foreign Service families stationed abroad must make special logistical arrangements when sending their children away to school. The suggestions in Chapter 16 for families preparing to send a child to college will also be helpful for families preparing to send a child to boarding school. With the younger child, parents will want to have even closer contact with the school and the relatives and friends who serve as surrogate parents.

## CHAPTER 9 WASHINGTON AREA SUMMER PROGRAMS

*A summer program is especially appropriate for those children facing a long summer while both parents work, for those returning from overseas who want a chance to reenter the American scene before school starts, or for those who live overseas but want to have an American camp experience. Summer program choices are primarily recreational (overnight camps, day camps, or onetime outings), or academic (enrichment or remedial). The Foreign Service Youth Foundation and Around the World in a Lifetime offer occasional summer activities for teens.*

### **CHOOSING A SUMMER ACTIVITY**

General camps offer a little bit of a lot of things; specialty camps are an opportunity to explore a favorite activity in depth. The Family Liaison Office maintains a small file of summer activities available to families in the Washington area. Families overseas can check the Community Liaison Office files, but should start planning early because the information may be outdated and registering for camp may take longer because of the distance. Special programs for children with physical handicaps, mental retardation, or other special needs are discussed in Chapter 10 of this book.

Following are some of the things that must be taken into consideration when choosing a summer activity:

- **Price:** Overnight camps average \$475 per week. Private general day and specialty camps average \$185 per 5-day week. County day care programs or YMCA camps cost between \$45-\$75 per week. County and city recreation department day camps are low priced for residents.
- **Age Considerations:** Programs for children between the ages of 5 and 8 should offer a wide variety of activities plus quiet periods. Between the ages of 9 and 12 children need extended periods of play with an emphasis on complicated skills, constant challenge, and lots of activity. Young teens thrive on independent adventure experiences such as kayaking, bike trips, or an apprentice program that combines counselor training with recreational activities.
- **Safety:** Counselors should have passed Red Cross first-aid courses and have water safety licenses. Overnight camps should be accredited by the American Camping Association.
- **Recommendations:** Ask program administrator for names of families who have previously used their program. They can be a good source of information about program and safety aspects. Talk to children who have attended the camp to find out if it was fun.

Each year, the March issue of the *Washingtonian* magazine contains an extensive list of summer camps and programs in the greater Washington area. This article is reproduced

and sent to every CLO office overseas. Copies of this article are also available in the Family Liaison Office.

## **WASHINGTON AREA RECREATION PROGRAMS**

All area counties and the District of Columbia offer summer recreation programs for residents. Information for specific areas can be obtained from the addresses below.

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Department of Recreation  
3149 - 16th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
Telephone: 202-673-7660

### **VIRGINIA**

#### ***Alexandria***

Alexandria Department of Recreation  
1108 Jefferson Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Telephone: 703-838-4343

#### ***Arlington***

Recreation Division  
300 North Park Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
Telephone: 703-358-4747

#### ***Fairfax City***

Department of Recreation  
3730 Old Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Telephone: 703-385-7858

#### ***Fairfax County***

Community and Recreation Services  
12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 1050  
Fairfax, VA 22035-1115  
Telephone: 703-324-4386

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

***Falls Church***

Falls Church Recreation and Parks  
223 Little Falls Street  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
Telephone: 703-241-5077

***Loudoun County***

Parks and Recreation Department  
18 North King Street  
Leesburg, VA 22075  
Telephone: 703-478-8407

**MARYLAND**

***Anne Arundel County***

Parks and Recreation Department  
Route 1, Box 1144  
Port Tobacco, MD 20677  
Telephone: 301-870-3388, ext. 5

***Howard County***

Recreation and Parks Department  
7120 Oakland Mills Road  
Columbia, MD 21046-1677  
Telephone: 410-313-4700

***Montgomery County***

Department of Recreation  
Program Administration  
12210 Bushey Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20902  
Telephones: 301-217-6800

***Prince George's County***

Maryland National Capital Parks Commission  
6600 Kenilworth Avenue  
Riverdale, MD 20737  
Telephone: 301-699-2407

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

## **WASHINGTON AREA SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Most Washington area school districts offer summer school programs, usually at a cost, with both remedial and enrichment components for students attending schools within their system. Sometimes they will accommodate out-of-jurisdiction students, including residents living abroad, on a fee basis. Registration is often required by June or earlier. Many programs do not change significantly from year to year, so it may be possible to use last year's program information to pre-enroll, pending verification of this year's costs and dates. For more information, contact the appropriate school system (see Ch 6, p 6 - 22).

Many Washington area private schools also offer summer school programs. Students do not have to be enrolled in the school to attend. Contact the individual private school for more information.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from

EPM Publications, Inc.

Box 490

McLean, VA 22101

Telephone: 1-800-289-2339 or 703-442-7810

*Adventure Vacation in Five Mid-Atlantic States (NC, VA, WV, MD, and PA)*

*The Maryland One-Day Trip Book: 190 Day-Long Excursions in the Land of Pleasant*

*Living*

*One-Day Trips Through History*

*Philadelphia One-Day Trip Book*

*Serious Fun: An Amazing Collection of Things Children Can Do and Try in Their Free Time*

*The Virginia One-Day Trip Book*

*Walking Tours of Old Washington and Alexandria*

*The Washington One-Day Trip Book*

Available from

Green Acres School

11701 Danville Drive

Rockville, MD 20852

Telephone: 301-881-4100

*Going Places With Children in Washington*

This book covers places of interest to children, including museums, monuments, neighborhoods, farms, gardens, participatory sports, cultural activities, and detailed information on parks.

The following books list activities in which families can participate during the summer holidays. These books are usually available in local libraries.

*The Washington Metropolitan Area Recreational Sports Guide*

From windsurfing to weight-lifting, from kangaroo boxing to karate, it lists all of the area's recreational options.

*Weekender*

Published every Friday by the *Washington Post*, it lists highlights for the next week.

*Weekender's Guide to the Four Seasons* by Robert Shosteck

Lists of places of historic, scenic, cultural, and recreational interest within 200 miles of Washington. Special-interest sections on topics such as horses, dog shows, and antiques. Includes hot lines for recreational ideas and a calendar of events.

## **RESIDENTIAL CAMPS AND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS**

### **Summer Residential Camps**

Because of the wide range of residential camp options available, parents can make the best choice only by talking to camp directors, reading brochures and descriptive materials carefully, speaking to former campers and their parents, and, if possible, visiting the camp. Both parents and children must work their way through a series of questions in order to decide what kind of camp program to choose. Answers to the following questions can help you decide.

- What is the camp's philosophy?
- What size is the camp?
- What are the living accommodations like?
- What is the composition and diversity of the camper population?
- What is the range of activities and is there adequate equipment to support the activities?
- What kind of optional trips are offered?
- Is the child really ready for an overnight camp?
- Does the child choose his/her own activities or are they prescribed by the camp?
- Are planned activities highly competitive?
- Can a child alter the activities if s/he is unhappy with them?
- What happens if the child becomes homesick, ill, or does not adjust well socially?
- What medical facilities are available on-site and nearby?
- Who is directly responsible for your child's supervision at camp?
- Who else can the child go to with problems?
- How are the counselors screened and trained?
- How long are the sessions?

- Knowledge of the staff is important.
- Do they have expertise in the activities they teach or supervise?
- What is the composition and diversity of staff population?
- What is the staff/camper ratio?
- Is one particular staff member assigned to see to the welfare of each child?
- Is the camp accredited?

Parents can use the services of free camp consulting organizations. The organizations are paid a commission by the camp or program. The advisory service should be supplied with the following information: child's age, grade, interests, geographic preference, time frame, and any special needs.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***Camps for Kids***

14905 Terrywood Drive

5036 Dover Court

Columbia, MD 21044

Telephone: 301-596-4049

This referral agency matches children to camps or travel programs.

### ***Child Care Connection*** (Montgomery County only)

322 West Edmonston Drive

Rockville, MD 20852

Telephone: 301-279-1773

This centralized referral service for summer programs specializes in preschoolers and school-age children.

### ***The American Camping Association***

12 West 31st Street

New York, NY 10001

Telephone: 212-268-7822

Revises and publishes annually *Guide to Accredited Camps*.

### ***Northern Virginia Youth Symphony Association***

4026 Hummer Road

Annandale, VA 22003

Telephone: 703-642-0862

Their February newsletter lists more than a dozen summer music camps, mostly in the eastern and mid-Atlantic states.

### ***Summer Solutions***

Family Liaison Office

Room 1212A

Department of State

Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076

Fax: (202) 647-1670

P.O. Box 9441  
McLean, VA 22102  
Telephone: 703-569-2616; 703-255-2540  
Toll free: 800-729-7295; 800-729-7090  
They advise on overnight camps and teen travel programs.

***Tips on Trips and Camps***

8804 Honeybee Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
Telephone: 301-670-1706

This referral service for camps and other summer experiences specializes in summer camps and trips for children and teens including programs abroad for language, travel, and study. They hold fairs where camp and program directors answer questions.

***BOARDING SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAMS***

Boarding school summer programs offer a host of academic, athletic, artistic, and travel opportunities. Many programs are open to both local students and to those who choose to live at the school. Programs might introduce the student to new fields or aid in the mastery of a known subject. Families are invited to come to the Family Liaison Office to review the file containing information on summer programs offered at boarding schools.

***SUMMER COLLEGE PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS***

Over 200 U.S. colleges and universities offer summer courses for high school students. Some of these courses are purely for enrichment, but others are college-level courses which enable students to earn college credits in advance. The programs range from 1 to 8 weeks. Students live in dorms, eat in dining halls, and experience what college life will be like. See Resources below for more information.

***INTERNSHIPS***

A number of organizations in the Washington area offer both paid and unpaid internships. An internship can be an excellent opportunity for a young person to explore the real world of work in different fields. Some of these are available for teens as well as college-age students and adults. See Resources below for more information.

## **ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FOR ADVENTUROUS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE-AGE STUDENTS**

Dozens of nonprofit organizations have summer programs offering opportunities to travel and gain work experience for the older student. Many of these programs can be used for academic credit. Some are offered throughout the year. A few of the more popular programs are described below. It is a good idea to apply early.

### ***AIESC***

14 West 23rd Street  
New York NY 10010

AIESC is a French acronym for International Association for Students in Economics and Business, a student-run work exchange group in the United States. For every foreign student placed in an American company, a position opens for a U.S. student overseas. Annually, 350 U.S. students are paid a living stipend while placed in companies abroad. AIESC arranges housing, insurance, transportation, and visas. The deadline is in February.

### ***Council on International Educational Exchange***

205 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY 10017  
Telephone: 212-661-1414

The Council arranges for reciprocal work exchange programs with Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Jamaica, and New Zealand. It arranges work permits for 3 to 6 months of employment abroad. Students must find their own jobs and housing, but the Council supplies them with an international student ID for many discounts, including discounts on flights. Students are eligible while enrolled full-time in college or university or within 6 months of graduation.

### ***Earthwatch Field Research Corps***

680 Mount Auburn Street  
Box 403  
Watertown, MA 02272

This is a volunteer organization that matches students with research expeditions in the fields of humanities and Earth, marine and life sciences in the United States and 30 foreign countries. Projects run from 2 to 4 weeks. The expense can be considerable, but half of all participants receive financial aid. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

### ***Legacy International Youth Program***

Route 4, Box 265  
Bedford, VA 24523  
Telephone: 703-297-5982

For 6 weeks every summer, youth between the ages of 11 and 18 plus staff members from more than 35 countries and cultures, create an international village in Bedford, Virginia, 4 hours south of Washington. Living, working, and learning together, participants find new ways of thinking and looking at the world.

***National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)***

288 Main Street  
Lander, Wyoming 82520-3128  
Telephone: 307-332-6973

NOLS uses wilderness as a classroom with extended courses, 10 days to 3 months long. It teaches skills and information essential for low-impact wilderness living. Many courses are for young people who are 16 years and older. A few courses are open to 14- and 15-year olds only. They also have semester programs for young people age 17 and older in Argentina, Kenya, Mexico, and the United States, including Alaska.

***Operation Crossroads Africa***

150 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10011  
Telephone: 212-870-2106

Students in this program live 7 to 8 weeks in rural parts of 16 African countries. The work can be either on community development projects in health, agriculture, or construction, or on anthropological or archeological sites. There is an initial orientation in Princeton, New Jersey, and the last 2 weeks are spent traveling in Africa with a group leader. Cost is high, but 90 percent of participants receive scholarships covering the entire fee. The deadline is March 15.

***Outward Bound***

Route 9D R2, Box 280  
Garrison, NY 10524  
Telephone: 1-800-243-8520; 914-424-4000

One of the best known summer outdoor programs in the United States, it also runs programs in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Pacific. It offers considerable financial aid. Admission is open until places are filled.

***The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars***

1101 14th Street NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone: 202-336-7600

This clearinghouse places college students in Congress, the Executive Branch, news media, labor unions, Common Cause, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other corporate and nonprofit organizations. The Center offers a structured work experience along with

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regular seminars, debates, briefings and lectures, and supervises the details of the intern's stay in Washington, including housing and evaluation. The application deadline is March 1.

### **EUROPEAN SUMMER CAMPS**

Summer camps or programs in Europe are also an option for the Foreign Service child, either coming from or going to an overseas assignment. Some limited information is available in the Family Liaison Office. Books listing European summer camps can be found in the Resources list below.

### **RESOURCES**

American Institute for Foreign Study  
102 Greenwich Avenue  
Greenwich, CT 06830  
Telephone: 203-869-9090

They can advise on summer programs of travel and study in Europe and Asia.

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*Summer on Campus: College Experiences for High School Students*

*International Herald Tribune*

Available at most posts overseas, this newspaper lists European summer camps in its annual educational supplement.

Available from Peterson's Guides. See Ch 5, for contact information.

*Private Secondary Schools*

Updated annually, this lists a number of European schools with summer programs.

*Summer Jobs*

*Summer Opportunities for Kids and Teenagers*

*Summer Study Abroad*

Available from Porter Sargent's Publisher. See Ch 5, for contact information.

*Guide to Summer Camps and Summer Schools*

Annually updated material is cross-referenced in a variety of ways, including travel abroad and foreign-language study.

*Schools Abroad of Interest to Americans*

Provides a description of day and boarding independent schools abroad. If schools have summer programs, they are described.

Available from Vincent/Curtis. See Ch 8, for contact information.

*The Educational Register: A Free Guide for Parents*

The register describes several international study programs and camps and offers a free advisory service to parents. The revised edition is distributed annually to CLO offices abroad and is available in the Family Liaison Office.

## **CHAPTER 10 THE FOREIGN SERVICE CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

*A child with special needs can be defined as one who differs developmentally from a normal child as a result either of a physical, mental, or emotional handicap, a developmental delay, or a specific learning disability. Both the Handicapped Child and Supplementary Education allowances are available to assist families with the extraordinary costs of providing special educational or related services to their children with special needs. Parents should understand the medical clearance procedures that determine eligibility for the allowances and know which will play a role in the assignment process. Learning disabilities are the most frequently encountered developmental problem among Foreign Service children.*

### **EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS**

Children with developmental problems will receive educational evaluations as part of the medical clearance process. As soon as it is suspected, parents should describe any developmental problem on the child's medical history form so that evaluation and treatment plans can be formulated early in the child's life. Experts in the field of special education stress the value of early intervention. Children with learning disabilities should not be thought of as abnormal; they simply have a different system for processing information. The key for parents and teachers is to discover what the child's processing system is and to help the child compensate with their strengths when fitting in, as far as possible, to the ordinary educational process.

Because developmental problems affect various areas of the child's physical and psychological health, the evaluations are often extensive. An evaluation of a child who is having trouble in school might include an educational assessment plus speech, hearing, and neurological examinations, and a series of psychiatric interviews.

### **PROCEDURE WHEN A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM IS SUSPECTED WHILE AT POST**

If a family is abroad and a developmental problem is suspected, the parents should have the child seen by the Regional Medical Officer, the Regional Psychiatrist, or the Nurse Practitioner. The parents should also obtain written reports from the school so that the problem can be fully understood.

It is unlikely that a full evaluation will be completed at post. The complexity of the issues requires the multi-specialty approach described above. For this reason, the assessments are usually done in the United States. A medical evacuation is usually not required. The State Department Medical Division will authorize the evaluation when the

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family is on their next home leave or R and R. If the school at post requests that a child be tested on an urgent basis and the Regional Medical Officer, the Regional Psychiatrist, or the Family Nurse Practitioner concurs, the child and one parent may use the Special Handicapped Child Education Allowance for travel to and from a diagnostic testing site.

The Employee Consultation Service (ECS) will assist parents in making arrangements to have a child evaluated. See ch 1, p 6 for information on ECS.

### ***CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR A CHILD WITH A DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEM***

The Medical Division will only give clearance for posts where the child's developmental needs can be met. If the evaluation is completed as part of the child's medical clearance examination, parents are required to obtain written confirmation that a school at the proposed post of assignment can meet the child's needs. The child will not be cleared for a specific post until that information is provided to the Medical Division.

If the evaluation is completed while the employee is in mid-tour, the child will be cleared to return to post. The school at post will then have the benefit of specific educational recommendations in attempting to develop a program for the child. Before the child is cleared for an onward post, however, a letter from the proposed new school will be required.

In making a clearance decision for the child, the evaluators and the Medical Division will consider the appropriateness of boarding school placement or home study options.

### ***DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION***

In Washington, Foreign Service families have used the following testing centers for educational evaluations: Kingsbury Center; the Lab School; the Episcopal Center for Children; and Wake, Kendall, Greene, Springer, and Isenman, Consultants. Outside Washington, the Employee Consultation Service often refers families to university-affiliated child development centers.

Typically, the educational diagnostician will meet first with the parents to get background information. Copies of school and/or medical reports provide additional background information. Testing is the next step. The diagnostician will select appropriate tests based on background information and observation of the child. For a child under age 8, testing may be done over 2 days, 2 or 3 hours per day. Over age 8, a child may complete the testing in 1 day. After the diagnostician reviews and interprets the tests, the results and recommendations are shared with parents in a meeting, followed by a written report which includes specific recommendations for the child's teacher.

For a discussion of some of the tests most commonly used to assist in the diagnosis and evaluation of developmental delays or learning differences see Ch 3, p 25.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION ALLOWANCES**

According to the State Department's Standardized Regulations (S.R.276.8), "an employee having a handicapped child with impairments which require special education and related services may be granted an education allowance for that child by the authorizing officer."

Once the child's handicap or special need has been properly identified in conjunction with a medical/educational authority, the employee overseas, on behalf of the child, becomes eligible for the special education allowance for a handicapped child. This allowance is intended to assist the employee with the extraordinary costs of educating a handicapped child overseas. It is available between the handicapped child's 3rd and 21st birthdays or until completion of high school, whichever is sooner. It can include the cost of schooling at post or *in the United States* during the employee's assignment overseas, preliminary diagnostic testing, travel of a family member to accompany the child to and from school, or travel from an overseas post for an interview prior to enrollment in a school. Additionally, the \$2,300 supplemental allowance may be used for tutoring.

There is an *at post* and an *away from post* special education allowance. The *at post* allowance is based on the average of public and private Washington area schools with special programs plus the average local transportation cost of a daily commute from a sampling of 10 posts, plus 20 percent. The *away from post* handicapped allowance is determined by the average cost of private and public special education boarding schools, plus three round trips (based on Washington/New York/Paris or Washington/New York/Bangkok fares). Both allowances are reviewed every summer. A detailed explanation of all education allowances is available from the Office of Allowances. See Ch 1, p 6 for contact information.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from Porter Sargent's Publishers. See Ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

*The Directory for Exceptional Children*

## **THE HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION**

In almost every case, the parent is the adult who has worked with his/her special-needs child most intensely over the longest period of time and is the best resource on dealing with the child. These parents need to work with their child's school system, but are often unsure how best to do it. The following suggestions, from the Northern Virginia chapter of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, could be useful to families living overseas as well as in the United States:

- Know how the school system functions. Find out what facilities and programs are in place as well as those that could be instituted.
- Become an advocate for your child to be sure the school is doing all that is possible to help her/him.

- Ask for advice on how to work through your problem rather than venting your frustration at the school.
- If a teacher is not being helpful, the following is suggested:
  - Try to work with the teacher.
  - Talk to the special education director if there is one.
  - Talk to the principal.
  - Talk to the teacher in the presence of the principal.
  - Offer to help in the classroom as an aide, trip chaperone, etc.

## **WAYS TO HELP**

The most important way that parents can help a learning-disabled child is to understand the way that their child processes information. Then the parent can ensure that information is given in the right way, at the right time, and in the right dose. The following suggestions can provide a framework to help the family cope with a learning disability. They are also suitable suggestions for dealing with any child.

- Work on the child's compensating abilities. Build self-esteem continually.
- Give simple, straightforward directions. Make only one request at a time. Assign only those tasks and projects that can be completed within a short time so the child's attention span is not strained. Praise completion of projects. If a project requires a series of steps, allow the child to master one step at a time.
- Help the child become organized. Provide labeled shelves and boxes for possessions. Make charts to help him/her remember tasks to be completed.
- Repeat routines with the child until they are mastered. Be patient, repeating even those routines or activities that you feel should have been mastered but which are still difficult for the child.
- Cooperate with the school. Ask the teacher what you can do at home to reinforce concepts being learned at school. Stay in frequent touch with the teacher.
- Do not set overly ambitious goals. Children feel better if they are praised readily for tasks mastered than if they continually fall short of the mark. Review the child's achievements together every day.
- Be consistent in enforcing your rules for social behavior. Discuss consequences of disobeying rules so that the child knows clearly what to expect. Praise correct behavior.
- Build a feeling of success by praising effort, giving special privileges when the child does especially well at something, showing enthusiasm about accomplishments. Regardless of how things are going, spend time together doing things that the child enjoys.

## **RESOURCES**

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Check the library for the following books.

*A Parent's Guide to Learning and School Problems* by Robert B. McCall  
*Negotiating the Special Education Maze* by Winifred Anderson, Stephen Chitwood,  
and Diedre Hayden

*No Easy Answers: The Learning Disabled Child at Home and School* by Sally Smith  
*The Misunderstood Child: a Guide for Parents of Learning Disabled Children* by  
Dr. Larry B. Silver

*Succeeding Against the Odds* by Sally Smith

Available from

National Center for Learning Disabilities

381 Park Avenue South, Suite 1420

New York, NY 10016

*Their World*, published annually

## **SCHOOL AND TESTING RECORDS**

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) suggests that families keep a file of documents and information on their special-needs child to ensure that the next school the child attends has adequate information for proper placement. Among the documents to be kept in this *Educational Passport* are the following:

- Copies of a child's individual education plans (IEP) describing the goals, objectives, and services for the child each year (see below).
- Assessment and reassessment reports that describe any disabilities.
- Copies of all medical statements regarding the child.
- Dated parental notes regarding the child (comments from professionals not recorded elsewhere, names of key staff who have known the child, parents' goals/objectives for their child, telephone numbers and addresses of previous schools, and sources of important documents about the child).
- The Individual Education Plan is a written statement of the instruction and expectations appropriate for the special-needs child. It should include a system for monitoring the child's progress as well as the following:
  - The child's level of educational performance.
  - Academic goals for the school year.
  - Short-term objectives, stated in instructional terms, that will lead to the achievement of yearly goals.
  - The specific special education and support services the child will receive.
  - The amount of time the child will spend in regular educational programs and justification for special placements recommended.
  - Initiation dates and length of services.

- Criteria and methods for evaluating the achievement of short-term objectives - annually, if not more often.

Parents should *never* surrender the original of their child's personal file to anyone. If a school or agency needs the information, a photocopy can be provided. When moving overseas from the United States, parents can ask their child's school to provide them with a copy of the special education and master file on the child.

Federal law requires all records of students enrolled in special education programs to be retained until students graduate or reach age 22, whichever comes first. Parents must request copies of any records from their area offices before their child graduates or leaves the school system, as these records may be necessary for social security or other benefits.

### ***THE SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILD OVERSEAS***

There are advantages and disadvantages to educating a special-needs child overseas. On the plus side, overseas schools and classes are generally smaller than U.S. schools, allowing more individual attention to be given to a child and the possibility of providing minimal support to the learning-disabled child. A major disadvantage is that most overseas schools do not have the comprehensive special-needs programs found in U.S. schools. Also, shifting student/teacher populations can hinder the continuity of special-needs programs.

Parents of special-needs children in the United States are familiar with Public Law 94.142, which mandates that public schools provide a comparable education for all children regardless of their special needs. As a result of this law, all U.S. public schools have special programs for learning-disabled (LD) and other handicapped students and/or inclusive individualized education in the regular classroom. Because of analogous legislation, Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS) overseas are also required to have special education programs which are available to Foreign Service families on a space-available basis. Many DoDDS schools, however, are centralizing special services and some schools have closed or will be closing.

Overseas schools assisted by the Department of State are independent, autonomous institutions not covered by U.S. legislation. They are not required to provide any special education for their students. Parents who plan to take a special-needs child on an overseas assignment must have direct contact with prospective schools at post in order to thoroughly investigate the resources available.

### ***CONSIDERING POSTS***

Based upon evaluations, recommendations from the child's current teachers, and family experience, parents should decide on their child's educational needs. In looking at posts, all available school literature should be reviewed. Be alert to warning signals about a school's limited program. Write, fax, or telephone directly to the school for specific information on placement, program, procedures, and resources. Consider whether

community resources such as counselors and recreational and medical facilities are available at the post. The Employee Consultation Service will assist parents in determining the availability at post of medical resources, psychological resources, speech therapy, or other special services. Check the FLO Family Member Skills Bank to see if there are Foreign Service spouses at post who are special education teachers or tutors. Consider acquiring some tutorial training in order to assist your child at post. See the FLO Education and Youth Officer for information on programs. Review all alternatives, from hiring a tutor at post to a career change, before making a final decision.

The best place for parents to begin an investigation of special needs resources overseas is the Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) annual Summary School Information project, described in Ch 1, p 5, which gathers information on the staffing, resources, and programs for special needs children. Microfiche copies of this information are available both in Washington and overseas. Parents may also contact the appropriate A/OS Regional Education Officer for first-hand information about a particular school's program. Because special education programs overseas change rapidly, parents should also contact the school directly and request information on programs that address their child's needs. Sending specific information about the child will enable the school to give an informed reply. Addresses for all overseas schools attended by American children are in the Summary School Information microfiche.

It is critical that parents allow enough time for the relevant State Department offices (Employee Consultation Service, Office of Allowances, the Office of Overseas Schools) to provide a proper solution to the problem of educating the special-needs child. Given enough lead time, the Office of Overseas Schools can sometimes assist a school to set up an appropriate program if one does not exist.

## **ESTABLISHING PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS**

Several successful networks for parents of special-needs children have been established at overseas posts. In Bangkok, the parents support group has become formally affiliated with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and is moving beyond the advocacy stage and into the realm of family support. Following is a comment on the group by one of its members:

*A parent's group will be successful if they can show that there is a convergence of interests among the various players. In the early meetings, there should be no school personnel in attendance. The reason is that these gatherings are generally dedicated to dispelling a great amount of pent-up frustration and anger. Parents have to take a long-term view of the problem and think in terms of what can be accomplished over several years, though this is in direct conflict with the pressing personal need that their child has at the moment.*

Other Parent Support Networks have been established overseas, notably in Paris and Singapore. Contact the FLO Education and Youth Officer to learn if there is an active Parent Support Network in Washington for families from the foreign affairs agencies.

## **WASHINGTON AREA PROGRAMS**

All Washington area public school systems have special education programs for mentally, physically, and emotionally handicapped children. Some still contract out some of their special education cases, but many have moved to *academic integration*, sometimes called *inclusion*, of the student into regular classes. For information on programs in the following districts, contact the appropriate office:

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Assistant Superintendent  
Special Programs & Alternative Education  
Goding School, 10th & F Streets NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Telephone: 202-724-4800

### **MARYLAND**

#### ***Anne Arundel County***

Office of Special Education  
Anne Arundel Public Schools  
2644 Riva Road  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: 410-222-5000

#### ***Howard County***

Director of Special Education  
Howard County Public Schools  
10910 Route 108  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
Telephone: 410-313-6742

#### ***Montgomery Country***

Associate Superintendent for Special  
and Alternative Education  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Telephone: 301-279-3604

#### ***Prince George's County***

Special Education Director  
Sasscer Administration Building

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

14201 School Lane  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
Telephone: 301-952-6335

## **VIRGINIA**

### ***Alexandria***

Special Education Director  
Alexandria City Schools  
2000 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
Telephone: 703-824-6650

### ***Arlington***

Department of Student Services  
Special Education  
1426 North Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22207  
Telephone: 703-358-6040

### ***Fairfax County***

Office of Special Education Programs  
10310 Layton Hall Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Telephone: 703-246-7899

### ***Falls Church***

Director of Pupil Services  
301 North Washington Street  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
Telephone: 703-241-7600, ext. 3

### ***Loudoun County***

Loudoun County Public Schools  
Special Education Department  
30 Sycolin Road, SE  
Leesburg, VA 22075  
Telephone: 703-771-6430

### ***Prince William County***

Special Education Department  
P. O. Box 389  
Manassas, VA 22110  
Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Telephone: 703-791-7287

***Stafford County***

Special Education Center  
Stafford County Public Schools  
1729 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Stafford, VA 22554  
Telephone: 703-720-3336

**RESOURCES**

Available from Fairfax County Department of Student Services and Education. See ch 10, p 16 for contact information.

*Information for Parents--Regulations and Procedures Governing the Education of Handicapped Children*

**PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Before parents consider enrolling their children in a special-needs school, it is essential that the child have a complete educational evaluation, including recommendations for appropriate programs. Chapter 3 describes tests often used in those evaluations. Parents should also be aware that some Washington area public school systems will pay to have students attend one of the private schools in the area when the public system cannot provide an adequate program for the child, but this occurs most frequently as a result of a court order, not solely on parental request.

*The Independent School Guide to Washington, D.C. and Surrounding Area* lists all private schools with programs for children with special needs. Three highly regarded private day school programs for the learning disabled are:

Lab School of Washington  
4759 Reservoir Road NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Telephone: 202-965-6600

This school, for children ages 4 1/2 to 18 with learning disabilities, also offers diagnostic services, tutoring, an after-school program, and career counseling.

Kingsbury Day School  
2138 Bancroft Place NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Telephone: 202-232-5878

This school is for children ages 5 to 11 with learning disabilities.

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The Chelsea School  
711 Pershing Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Telephone: 301-585-1430  
This school is for children ages 6 to 19 with learning disabilities.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from Peterson's Guides. See ch 5, p 18 for contact information.  
*Caring for Kids with Special Needs*

## **LEARNING-DISABILITY CHARACTERISTICS**

It is estimated that 6 to 10 percent of the population of the United States has a specific learning disability, and it is reasonable to assume that the Foreign Service child population has a similar profile. The causes of learning disabilities have never been determined; a variety of circumstances before, during, and after birth can contribute to this condition. Learning disabilities tend to run in families, and it is not uncommon to find a parent and several children in the same family affected. Some learning-disabled children are also gifted and talented.

Many people think of learning disabilities as a single condition which causes a person to reverse letters and read words backwards. However, a learning difference may occur in reading, spelling, math, organization, or motor performance, such as handwriting. A child's problem with learning may involve one or more of these learning disabilities.

**Visual Perception Disability:** Difficulty distinguishing subtle differences in shapes, reversing letters like "d" and "b" or "p" and "q", or confusing "E" and "3."

**Auditory Perception Disability:** Difficulty distinguishing subtle differences in sound. LD children may confuse words such as "blue" and "blow" or "ball" and "bell." Some may have an auditory lag and cannot process spoken messages as fast as others.

**Sequencing Disability:** Mixing up the sequence of events, beginning in the middle, moving to the end, going on to the start.

**Abstraction Disability:** Difficulty understanding the concepts behind words or images, e.g., knowing how to vote but not understanding the concept of representative government.

**Memory Disability:** Difficulty with either short-term memory or long-term memory.

**Language Disability:** Difficulty responding to questions because of inability to organize thought, find the right words, and speak.

**Motor Disability:** A gross motor disability is difficulty using large muscle groups (trouble walking, running, climbing, or riding a bicycle). Fine motor disability is difficulty using small muscle groups (slow, poor handwriting).

In *A Parent's Guide to Learning and School Problems*, Robert B. McCall describes the following characteristics of the learning-disabled child. It is important that parents realize that

all children may have some of these traits some of the time; however, the learning-disabled child exhibits them persistently:

- Difficulty reading, writing, and calculating, especially with tasks that require a specific order or sequence.
- Delayed ability to speak, to understand stories, to follow simple directions.
- Use of words out of sequence, even in simple sentences.
- Inability to correctly say words that are not usually difficult for their age group (hopsital for hospital, emenies for enemies, aanimals for animals).
- Difficulty finding the right word when speaking.
- Inability to associate a letter with its sound.
- Difficulty learning and remembering printed words.
- Persistent spelling errors.
- Ability to perform arithmetic operations in their heads but not on paper, to add and subtract but not multiply or divide.
- Inability to translate thought processes to the written word.
- Confusion about directions in space or time, right and left, up and down, yesterday and tomorrow.
- Difficulty being neat and organized, making decisions.
- Awkwardness in physical activities.

Unfortunately, as a result of one or more of these traits, the learning-disabled child may also be socially isolated, immature, or disruptive.

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), sometimes in concert with hyperactivity (ADHD), may also be seen in conjunction with or separate from other learning problems.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from the National Center for Learning Disabilities. See ch 10, p 8 for contact information.

*We Can Learn: Understanding and Helping Children with Learning Disabilities.*

This is a five-part video series and manual.

## **COLLEGE AND THE LEARNING-DISABLED**

Being admitted to the college of their choice and having a successful experience can be an exciting challenge for learning-disabled (LD) students. The information on the college admissions process in Chapter 13 of this book is as relevant to the learning-disabled as it is to other students.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects all handicapped students against discrimination:

*No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of,*

*or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*

Specifically, Section 504 prohibits discrimination in the following ways:

***Admission and Confidentiality:*** Colleges are prohibited from making preadmission inquiries about learning disabilities. Colleges may not limit the number of learning-disabled students admitted.

***Selection of Courses:*** Colleges cannot exclude qualified students from taking any course they choose. Programs must be offered in the most inclusive setting appropriate. Students may participate in any program with no extra help if they so choose.

***Academic Adjustments:*** Colleges are required to make appropriate academic adjustments to learning-disabled students, such as extended time to complete a degree, alternate forms of testing, and permission to use tape recorders in the classroom.

***Housing, Health and Insurance, Financial Assistance:*** Colleges are required to provide appropriate housing, health facilities, and student health insurance policies to all students. Qualified learning-disabled students must have an opportunity to receive financial aid.

***Counseling and Social Organizations:*** Colleges must provide nonacademic services such as physical education, counseling and placement, and social clubs and organizations in a nondiscriminatory manner.

## **TAKING THE SATS**

Students with learning disabilities who wish to take their SAT tests on the same dates and at the same test centers as their nonhandicapped peers can register for the November and May SAT test dates. The LD option provides for a separate test room, a more carefully controlled testing environment, and up to 1 1/2 hours of additional testing time. It does not provide special services such as large-type editions, editions on cassette tape, the help of an amanuensis, or up to 12 hours of testing. Score reports of students who choose this option will carry the "NONSTD ADMIN" (nonstandard administration) designation.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from the  
College Board SAT Program  
PO Box 6226  
Princeton, NJ 08541-6226  
Telephone: 609-771-7600

*SAT Services for Students with Disabilities*

## **SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Special summer programs and camps for children with various learning difficulties are available in the Washington area and elsewhere. Listings of a few of these programs are available in the Family Liaison Office.

## **COLLEGES WITH FACILITIES FOR THE LEARNING-DISABLED STUDENT**

An increasing number of colleges recognize the need to offer special services to the learning-disabled college student. A number of directories and lists have been published giving information about these schools and their programs.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from  
Skyler Consultation Center  
PO Box 121  
Rockaway Park, NY 11694

*What Do You Do After High School*

This book lists 500 programs including colleges, residential, social, and vocational possibilities.

Available from Peterson's Guides. See ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

*Colleges With Programs for Students With Learning Disabilities*

Available from  
Learning Disabilities Association  
4156 Library Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234  
Telephone: 412-341-1515

*List of Colleges/Universities That Accept Students With Learning Disabilities*

Check the library for the following books.

*Campus Access for Learning Disabled Students* by Barbara Schneider and Jeanne Talpers

This is a comprehensive guide to success in post secondary education programs.

*Lovejoy's Four Year Guide for the Learning Disabled Student* by Charles Straughn and Dr. Marvelle S. Colby Straughn

## ***SUMMER PROGRAM FOR LEARNING DISABLED COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS***

Landmark College, Putney, VT is a college designed exclusively for dyslexic or learning disabled students. It offers a Skills Development Summer Session for college students and high school graduates who are intellectually capable and emotionally sound, but whose language and study skills are inadequate for success in college. Because the program is rigorous and demanding, it will best serve those candidates whose maturity and commitment to education are high.

The program includes a study skills course, composition and literature, and a 2-hour daily tutorial on such language arts skills as reading comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. For information and application procedures, contact the school at:

Landmark College  
River Road  
Putney, VT 05346  
Telephone: 802-387-4767

## **CHAPTER 11 THE GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILD THE INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED CHILD**

Identifying a musically, athletically, or artistically gifted child is often less difficult than identifying the intellectually gifted child. An intellectually gifted child is characterized by a pattern of attributes in her/his approach to learning. The gifted child challenges generalizations; sees relationships between diverse subjects; has a curious, questioning attitude; shows a propensity for creative thought; has an intense sense of justice and morality; has multiple and varied interests; exhibits a strong commitment to task; is persistent and tenacious; has keen powers of observation; has the ability to abstract, conceptualize, and synthesize; is skeptical and critical; has rapid insight into relationships; and often has a keen sense of humor.

Gifted children learn to read earlier, often before entering school, sometimes on their own, and with a greater comprehension of the nuances of the language. They usually have large vocabularies for their age. They learn basic skills more quickly and need less practice. They display an ability for abstract thinking in advance of their peers. Their concentration and attention spans are longer. They often have a wide variety of interests and experiment with them. They have a highly developed sense of curiosity and a limitless supply of questions. They are good guessers. They can construct relationships between things that are not readily obvious. They can retain a lot of information.

The ideal school program for the gifted child fosters his/her ability to evaluate facts and arguments critically; to create new ideas and originate new lines of thought; to reason through complex problems; to associate and interrelate concepts; to understand other situations, times, and people; to work independently on research projects; and to develop an interdisciplinary approach to subject matter.

### ***INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES***

Some intellectually gifted children also have learning differences and become particularly frustrated with their inability to produce in the classroom in exactly the same way as their peers. Parents must be strong advocates for their children in order to enable these young people to find satisfying expression of their special gifts.

### ***THE GIFTED PRESCHOOLER***

As there are strong indications that mature intelligence is developed between conception and 4 years of age, it is important for gifted and talented youngsters to be exposed to a high-quality learning environment as soon as possible. Parents play an important role in identifying the gifted preschool child, as they can supply developmental information and other data not readily observable in more structured situations.

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

Some characteristics parents and teachers should look for in preschoolers:

- The use of advanced vocabulary for their age;
- Employment of spontaneous verbal elaborations with new experiences;
- Ability to construct interesting or unusual shapes or patterns through various media;
- Ability to assemble puzzles designed for older children;
- Sense of humor used in general conversation;
- Understanding of abstract concepts, such as death and time;
- Mastery of new skills with little repetition;
- Demonstration of advanced physical skills;
- Demonstration of advanced reasoning skills through the explanation of occurrences.

Children's perceptions of their peers also can be a revealing source of information. To find out how children who possess unique abilities are perceived by their peers, the following types of questions can be asked:

- Which child in class can make a broken toy work?
- Who in the class can make up the best new game?
- Who is the very best at following directions?
- Who asks the most questions?

### ***TIPS FOR PARENTING***

Gifted and talented children challenge traditional ideas and attitudes about being parents. Sometimes the responsibility of helping children become all they can be weighs heavily; but giftedness should be looked on as a challenge and not a problem, and parents, hopefully, will enjoy the experience. These children are wonderful treasures.

Parents can help meet the needs of their gifted and talented children by providing them with a wide variety of experiences. Take children to museums, airports, the library, and musical and dramatic performances. Play new games, do experiments, engage in sports together. For children enrolled in a structured educational or enrichment program, parent participation, input, and support are vital.

It is important to provide a variety of stimuli and experiences geared to the child's natural interests. In addition to books, toys, stories, puzzles, and games, parents should also provide materials and experiences that encourage the use of imagination, challenge the child's abilities, and encourage the development of perceptual and motor skills. The computer can become a fascinating source of learning. Encourage your child to record his/her ideas in some way, even if the written word is not yet fully developed. Allow ample time for thinking and daydreaming. Assign household tasks that coincide with interests. Encourage your child to translate her/his interests into specific products, e.g., stories, pictures, collections, inventions, tools. Accept and use your child's tendency to see things differently and

encourage active rather than passive learning. Play all kinds of word games whenever possible.

Parents should develop the habit of asking the children as many questions as possible. For example, "What would happen if...?" "How does it work?" "How would you change it?" "What else can you do with that?" "Why?" "What will it be like a (week, month, year) from now?"

It is important to remember that gifted and talented children are children first and gifted and talented second. Like all children, they need and respond to love, caring, interest, and guidance from their parents. Sometimes, however, being gifted and talented becomes a burden, especially if their environment does not meet their needs and expectations, or if peers react negatively to their abilities. The gifted child may become insecure, withdraw, or act out frustrations in the form of disruptive behavior. It is not uncommon for gifted and talented children to achieve at levels lower than their capabilities if lack of challenge in school produces disinterest or if giftedness is accompanied by learning disabilities. Meeting these problems will require a cooperative effort between parents, school officials, and, in some cases, a professional counselor.

### **WASHINGTON AREA PROGRAMS**

All Washington area public schools have some type of special program for gifted and talented children (often called GT or TAG programs). Some school districts have magnet programs in both elementary and secondary schools for students identified as gifted and talented. In all-school magnet programs, everyone attending the school benefits from a varied and extensive range of programs as well as extra staffing and resources. Gifted and talented centers offer enriched and accelerated courses tailored to each student's needs and abilities. In many secondary programs, magnet students spend half of each day in magnet classes and the other half mainstreamed with the rest of the student body. Efforts are made to help the magnet students feel a part of the whole school and not a special group of super brains. For information about any school system's gifted and talented program, contact the office listed below.

Each district has its own method of choosing those who may participate in their intellectually gifted programs. These methods change from time to time; it is possible that a child who has participated in a different grade during an earlier posting may not qualify to participate upon return. Fairfax County, for example, has moved from strictly test-based scores to assessment of second grade candidates with multiple criteria and a holistic assessment by a central selection committee. Optional data, including results of private tests provided by parents, will be considered if submitted. Admission procedure for older students and those new to the jurisdiction is based on referrals and possible testing.

Parents must contact the appropriate school jurisdiction personnel to ascertain the method of choice for the programs.

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Director, Gifted and Talented Program  
Nalle Elementary School  
50th & C Streets SE  
Washington, DC 20019  
Telephone: 202-645-3200

## **MARYLAND**

### ***Anne Arundel County***

Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Program  
Anne Arundel County Public Schools  
2644 Riva Road  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: 410-222-5430

### ***Howard County***

Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Program  
Howard County Public Schools  
Faulkner Ridge Center  
10598 Marble Faun Court  
Columbia, MD 21044  
Telephone: 410-313-7011

### ***Montgomery County***

Educational Planner for Gifted and Talented  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Telephone: 301-279-3163

### ***Prince George's County***

Gifted and Talented Program Coordinator  
9201 East Hampton Drive  
Capitol Heights, MD 20743  
Telephone: 301-808-8270

## **VIRGINIA**

### ***Alexandria***

Gifted and Talented Program  
Alexandria City Public Schools

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

2000 North Beauregard  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
Telephone: 703-824-6680

***Arlington***

Coordinator, Gifted and Talented Program  
1426 North Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22207  
Telephone: 703-358-6160

***Fairfax County***

Assistant Coordinator  
Gifted and Talented Section  
2831 Graham Road  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Telephone: 703-876-5272

***Falls Church***

Gifted and Talented Program Coordinator  
301 North Washington Street  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
Telephone: 703-241-7614

***Loudoun***

Gifted and Talented Program  
Loudoun County Public Schools  
102 North Street, NW  
Leesburg, VA 22075  
Telephone: 703-771-6435

***Prince William County***

Gifted Education Office  
Prince William County Public Schools  
P.O. Box 389  
Manassas, VA 22110  
Telephone: 703-791-7400

***Stafford County***

FOCUS  
Stafford County Public Schools  
1729 Jefferson Davis Highway

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Stafford, VA 22554  
Telephone: 703-720-3336

### ***OTHER GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS***

In addition to public school programs, the following special programs for the highly gifted are available:

#### ***Governor's School for the Gifted at Mary Baldwin College***

Students are selected from all high schools in Virginia to attend an intensive 4-week summer program of interdisciplinary studies in the arts and sciences. Past topics have included the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Idea of the Modern. Virginia residents abroad can inquire about being identified by their schools for this summer program by writing to:

Director of Governor's School for the Gifted  
4100 Grace Street  
State Department of Education  
Richmond, VA 23230  
Telephone: 804-780-6155  
Fax: 804-780-6043

#### ***Johns Hopkins Talent Search***

The Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth (CTY), which is part of the Institute for the Academic Advancement of Youth (IAAY), conducts an annual talent search to identify academically able students. The Search invites students who are in the 7th grade and who have scored at the 97th percentile or above on in-grade standardized tests in either mathematics, verbal, or total test battery to take the SAT I. Students may seek to qualify after the 7th grade, but qualifying scores rise with age from under 13 years up to 17 years. SAT scores are reported to CTY which recognizes ability according to a scale of scores that takes into account the recent "recentering" of SAT results. New applicants taking the SAT I after April 1995 must score at-or-above- 510 on Verbal to qualify for humanities courses and at-or-above 530 on Math plus a combined Math and Verbal of 1040 for math and science courses.

Those who qualify receive eligibility for special academic programs offered by CTY every summer at college campuses on the East and West Coasts of the United States and through cooperative programs in Europe. Students have the opportunity to study challenging liberal arts subject matter and be stimulated by their academic peers. In addition, CTY provides information on other U.S. advanced academic programs and guidance on getting the best pre-college education for able students. A variety of other services are available including newsletters, research findings, and publications and resources to guide parents and students as they plan an appropriate education.

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Overseas students should request assistance in entering the talent search from their overseas school and have their SAT I scores reported to CTY.

CTY also conducts a Young Students Talent Search and academic programs for students in grades five and six. This initiative is directed to stateside students or those overseas students who receive testing stateside and return for academic programs. Information is available from CTY.

CTY  
The Johns Hopkins University  
3400 North Charles Street  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Telephone: 410-516-0337  
Fax: 410-516-0804

***Mary Baldwin Program for Exceptionally Gifted Girls***

This program enables a girl to complete 8 years of high school and college in 5 years. For more information, write to:

Program for the Exceptionally Gifted  
Mary Baldwin College  
Staunton, VA 24401  
Telephone: 703-887-7039  
Fax: 703-887-7187

***Talent Identification Program (TIP)***

Outside the metropolitan Washington area, the Talent Identification Program at Duke University uses the SAT test to find gifted youngsters at about age 12. Participants are located across the United States and overseas. The most capable students are invited to supplement their education in a 3-week summer residential program offered on the Duke campus each year. The students can then be enrolled in TIP's By-Mail course, which provides a textbook, lessons, and supplemental materials in such courses as calculus, Latin, American history, biology, chemistry, English language use and origin, literature, physics, precalculus and writing. This program includes students from across the country and overseas students. For more information, contact:

Talent Identification Program  
Duke University  
PO Box 90747  
Durham, NC 27708  
Telephone: 919-684-3847  
Fax: 919-681-7921

## **OTHER SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED**

In addition to those listed above, a number of summer camps and programs are designed especially to meet the needs of gifted children. Some of these programs are described in the following publications.

### **RESOURCES**

#### *Computerized Database of Summer Programs for Gifted and Talented Students*

This service is available in two formats:

1) You may request a search, specifying a particular region or state, topic or focus, grade level and/or other criteria.

2) You may order the entire diskette and do your own search.

For cost and more information write or call:

The Council for Exceptional Children  
1920 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 22091  
Telephone: 703-264-9471

#### *Fairfax County Association for the Gifted (FCAG) Newsletter*

Washington area summer programs for the gifted are described in the spring issue of this newsletter. Listings include county recreation, private school, and university and public school programs especially designed for the gifted. The *FCAG Newsletter* also lists suitable summer enrichment programs for teens throughout the United States. See ch 11, p 19 for contact information.

#### *Vivace*

This newsletter put out by the Northern Virginia Youth Symphony Association, lists more than a dozen summer music camps, mostly in the eastern and mid-Atlantic states, in their February issue. See Ch 9, p 11 for contact information.

## **PARENTAL ADVOCACY**

Parents often need to act as advocates for their gifted child, especially when overseas. Unfortunately, often parents may find themselves in adversarial relationships with school personnel. This can be avoided if the parents are careful and sensitive in their advocacy. The following guidelines may be helpful:

- Be supportive in any approach to the school; demonstrate concern for quality education for all children.
- Get all available information about educating gifted students, including how your school system identifies gifted and talented children.
- Get to know the child's teacher; be a volunteer.
- Be sure of information before suggesting changes.

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- Become a member of the school advisory committee or school board.
- Be persistent but polite.
- Depersonalize efforts on behalf of gifted children whenever possible; gather a group of parents concerned about the same issues.

Parents should be careful in their approach to the school. Start with the person most directly involved. Try the "I have a problem" approach and describe it in calm and polite terms. Telling about your problem invites other people to put their creative ideas to work in solving it and then puts them in the position of approving or helping to implement their solution. Do not blame the teacher or coordinator of the gifted program for all its shortcomings. These individuals are usually the strongest advocates of gifted education in the system.

*Inclusion*, also called cooperative learning, is a movement gaining support in the United States that opposes taking students out of regular classrooms either for enrichment or remediation. It is appealing both to those who feel gifted programs discriminate against minorities and those who hope to cut budgets by eliminating special services.

## RESOURCES

Available from  
The Johns Hopkins University Press  
PO Box 19966  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
Telephone: 410-516-0245  
Fax: 410-516-0108

*Imagine: Opportunities and Resources for Academically Talented Youth*  
Six issues per year are available by subscription.

## THE GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILD OVERSEAS

Gifted and talented programs are available in many overseas schools, but the programs vary widely. The best information on any school will be found in the school summary microfiche put out annually by the Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS). See Chapter 1 of this book for more information about A/OS and the microfiche. The Advisory Committee for Exceptional Children and Youth, sponsored by A/OS, has developed a special project to encourage the establishment of Gifted and Talented Programs in A/OS-assisted schools abroad. Parents concerned about their gifted child in an overseas school should contact A/OS for advice. Often the supplementary education allowance can be used to set up Advanced Placement courses. (See the discussion of supplementary education in Chapter 5.)

Parents must take the initiative to learn more about both educating the gifted child and about portable enrichment materials geared toward gifted youngsters, particularly at the elementary level. All families, but particularly those with special learning agendas, should consider taking a home computer and software to post. It is reassuring to know that even

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when there are few or no structured programs available overseas, the local environment can offer compensating riches in exposure to new languages, cultures, and different physical environments.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY RESOURCE LIBRARY OVERSEAS - PUBLICATIONS AND COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

One disadvantage of living overseas with a gifted child is the lack, at most posts, of the resources of an American public library. Parents should invest in a family resource library to include standard reference materials such as a good encyclopedia, thesaurus, almanac, current atlas, and other reference books for young people, such as history of art, companion to music, books on mammals, books on astronomy, classic works of literature, and materials on the area of the world you will be living in. Parents may wish to subscribe to one of the publications on gifted and talented learners listed in the reference list and be aware of new services as they are published. Several publishers, including the *New York Times*, regularly update recommended books for younger readers.

In addition, a computer which can be used by the child should be moved from place to place. As new materials, including CD-Roms, are provided, they should be added to the software collection. Families overseas should investigate British Council Libraries and American Cultural Center Libraries to supplement personal collections.

### **RESOURCES**

Available from:

CTY Publications and Resources

The Johns Hopkins University

3400 North Charles Street

Baltimore, MD 21218

Telephone: 410-516-0245

Fax: 410-516-0108

*Program Opportunities for Academically Talented Students*

*The Gifted Learning Disabled Student*

### **Periodicals**

Available from

Exceptional Parent Press

PO Box 3000

Denville, NJ 07834

Telephone: 800-247-8080

*The Exceptional Parent*

Available from

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076

Fax: (202) 647-1670

Gifted Child Today (GTY)  
Box 6448  
Mobile, AL 36660  
Telephone: 205-478-4700  
Fax: 205-478-4755  
*Gifted Child Today*

Available from  
National Association for Gifted Children  
1155 - 15th Street NW, Suite 1002  
Washington, DC 20005-2706  
Telephone: 202-785-4268  
*The Gifted Child Quarterly*

**Washington Area Associations**

Education Resource Information Center  
Clearinghouse on Disability and Gifted Education  
1920 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 22091  
Telephone: 703-620-3660

Fairfax County Association for the Gifted (FCAG)  
2831 Graham Road  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Telephone: 703-876-5272

Northern Virginia Council for Gifted/Talented Education  
P.O. Box 705  
Falls Church, VA 22046

## CHAPTER 12 PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

### ***PRE-COLLEGE ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS***

Enrichment programs such as Advanced Placement (AP) or the International Baccalaureate (IB) enable educators to recognize differences among students and to offer the more academically able student appropriately demanding academic opportunities. Enrichment programs also provide a stimulus, a vehicle, and a measure of an educational system's services to its college-bound students. These programs give students the opportunity to pursue college-level studies and to receive advanced placement and/or credit upon entering college.

### ***The Advanced Placement Program***

A school participating in the AP program uses course descriptions prepared by a committee of teachers appointed by the College Board to set up introductory college courses in one or more of the following 14 fields: art, biology, chemistry, computer science, English, French, German, government/politics, history, Latin, mathematics, music, physics, and Spanish. The AP examinations are administered in May by the Educational Testing Service. Tests are graded on a five-point scale in June, and the grades are sent to the students, their high schools, and their designated colleges in July. The test is described in Chapter 3 of this book. The AP program is available in most Washington area public and private secondary schools. Any overseas school may participate in the AP program by appointing an AP coordinator and ordering the examinations. It is possible to use the supplemental allowance to help set up an AP program at a school in a post where it is not offered.

### **RESOURCES**

Available from  
Educational Testing Service  
1440 Lower Ferry Road  
Ewing Township  
Trenton, NJ 08618  
Telephone: 609-921-9000

Advanced Placement course description booklets:

*School Administrator's Guide to the Advanced Placement Program*

*A Guide to the Advanced Placement Program*

*Sophomore Standing Through Advanced Placement*

## ***The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program***

The IB is a course of study designed by the International Baccalaureate Office based in Geneva, Switzerland. It was established with the cooperation of UNESCO, the Oxford and Cambridge Boards of the General Certificate of Education, and the Advanced Placement program of the College Board. The program is offered in schools around the world.

The IB operates during the last 2 years of secondary school. It offers academically challenging courses that emphasize the philosophy of learning and the integration of disciplines. The IB Diploma is recognized for university admission throughout the world and for course credit at colleges and universities in Canada and the United States. Its greatest value, however, lies in its intrinsic worth as a challenge and a symbol of the greater achievement to which students and teachers aspire.

Because the curriculum is demanding, it is generally recommended that students have at least a B average when applying for the program. Motivation and good study habits are highly desirable. The student takes a first language (usually the native language), a second modern language, the Study of Man, experimental sciences, mathematics, and electives. Students must also take Theory of Knowledge, a unique course created for the IB program. In this course, students reflect on their secondary school experience in a comparative and critical way, investigating the knowledge, claims, and judgments of logic, mathematics, natural and social sciences, history, ethics, and aesthetics. The course concludes with an examination of opinion, faith, belief, and truth. IB students are also required to undertake independent work in one of the subjects they study, to prepare an extended essay or research report to be assessed by an examiner, and to spend the equivalent of at least one afternoon a week in some creative or aesthetic experience, or in a social service activity.

Students who do not want to fulfill the IB Diploma requirements can receive a certificate for each IB course and examination taken. Both the IB Diploma and the certificates with qualifying grades are recognized by many colleges and universities for individual course credit or advanced placement.

Several high schools in the Washington area now offer the IB. George Mason, the public High School in Falls Church City, and the Washington International School, a private school in D.C., have offered it for many years. In addition, the following public high schools offer the IB: Richard Montgomery in Rockville (Montgomery County); Central, Laurel, Parkdale, and Suitland (Prince George's County); Stonewall Jackson in Manassas (Prince William County); Jeb Stuart and Mt. Vernon in Alexandria (Fairfax County). Arlington County plans to offer the IB at Washington and Lee High School beginning in 1996.

## **RESOURCES**

International Baccalaureate of North America  
200 Madison Avenue, Suite 2007  
New York, NY 10016  
Telephone: 212-696-4464.

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Room 1212A  
Department of State  
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## **COLLEGE PREPARATORY SUBJECTS**

English, the arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign languages are the core of the college preparatory curriculum. A firm grasp of *English* grammar and patterns of usage is essential. Students should be able to read analytically seeing relationships between form and content, and understand a range of literature representing different literary forms and cultures.

Students should be able to understand and appreciate the unique qualities of *the arts* (visual arts, theater, music, and dance), how cultures express themselves through art, and how different artistic styles influence and are influenced by social and intellectual styles.

A strong preparation in *mathematics* is essential in today's world, and opens a wide range of career choices. College entrants will need statistics, algebra, geometry, and functions.

Comprehending and discussing developments such as nuclear power, genetic engineering, robotics, information and data processing, or organ transplants requires a knowledge and understanding of *science* and its methods. College entrants need detailed knowledge of at least one field of science, either biology, chemistry, physics, or earth science, or one of the newer interdisciplinary fields.

In order to perform effectively as citizens, students must have a grounding in *social studies*, specifically, a general knowledge of political, social, and cultural history, world history, geography and cultures, and U.S. history and government. Students should understand major political and economic institutions and their historical development, social and cultural history, major trends in the contemporary world, and the variety of written, numerical, and visual forms of data, techniques of quantitative and non-quantitative analysis, and diverse interpretations of data.

Knowledge of a *foreign language* permits informal communication and facilitates the exchange of ideas and information. Language and culture study allow the student to ask and answer questions and conduct a simple conversation, to pronounce the language well enough to be understood, to understand simple questions and statements in the foreign language, to read and understand information in a single paragraph and to deal with everyday situations in the culture.

The College Board's Academic Preparation series, listed below, can provide a yardstick for Foreign Service parents moving from post to post on whether their children are acquiring the skills necessary to be successful in college.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able To Do*

## **ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE**

In 1980, the College Board made an explicit commitment to strengthening every student's academic preparation for college. Through its Education EQuality Project, the Board worked out basic academic competencies and subject areas needed by entrants to all post-secondary institutions. The College Board booklet, *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able To Do*, describes in detail the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college. The main points are summarized below. This information should be a useful measure of whether a school is providing adequate college preparation.

**Basic study skills** include the ability to "learn how to learn." The college-bound student must be able to do the following:

- Set study goals and priorities, establish surroundings and habits conducive to independent learning, and follow a schedule.
- Use resources outside the classroom and incorporate such resources in the learning process.
- Develop and use general and specialized vocabularies.
- Understand and follow customary instructions; comprehend, analyze, and report main ideas; and synthesize and apply knowledge to new situations.
- Prepare for various types of examinations.
- Accept and learn from constructive criticism.

**Reading skills** include the ability to identify and comprehend ideas, to recognize different writing purposes and methods, and to separate one's personal opinions and assumptions from a writer's. The student should be able to use a book's table of contents, preface, index, glossary, appendix, and bibliography.

**Writing skills** should include the ability to conceive, organize, select, and relate ideas and to outline and develop them in coherent paragraphs. The student should be able to vary his/her writing style for different purposes, to restructure and rewrite, to gather information from primary and secondary sources, to cite sources properly, and to quote, paraphrase, and summarize accurately.

**Speaking and listening skills** include the ability to exchange ideas, to answer and ask questions coherently and concisely, to identify and understand main and subordinate ideas, to choose and organize related ideas and present them clearly in Standard English, and to evaluate similar presentations by others.

**Mathematical skills** allow a student to add, subtract, multiply, and divide using natural numbers, fractions, decimals, and integers. The student should be able to make estimates and approximations, formulate and solve problems in mathematical terms, select and use problem-solving tools such as mental computation, trial and error, calculators and computers, and use elementary concepts of probabilities and statistics.

**Reasoning skills** necessary for college include the ability to identify and formulate problems, evaluate and propose solutions, recognize and use inductive and deductive

reasoning, to recognize fallacies, draw reasonable conclusions from written and spoken sources, and distinguish between fact and opinion.

### ***STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR COLLEGE***

Colleges have different standardized test requirements for their applicants. College admission guidebooks (See Ch 13, p 3) indicate which colleges require which tests. It is best if testing requirements can be determined early in the 11th grade so that the student knows both the test dates and the registration deadlines. The standardized tests commonly used for college admission (the SAT I, the SAT II, and the ACT) are described in Chapter 3 of this book. Some state colleges have additional test requirements; information should be requested from the state education agency or the individual college.

## CHAPTER 13 CHOOSING A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

*Choosing a college or university is stressful for any high school student because there are so many choices. The decision is important because, even if the student changes his/her mind and transfers to another school, it will have an effect on other important life events. The Foreign Service adds another dimension to this process. The Foreign Service experience can be helpful when applying to schools. It can also mean that the student has to be more organized and start the process earlier. This chapter is designed to give information that will be helpful to all students applying to college. It will also highlight areas where the overseas student will need to make an extra effort.*

### **GATHERING INFORMATION**

There are more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States: public and private 2-year and 4-year institutions, large universities, low-cost community colleges, and religiously affiliated schools. A wide variety of programs meets the needs of the many different kinds of students enrolling in college today.

The following questions can help a student determine what kinds of institutions s/he is interested in:

- What are your educational goals?
- What is your academic potential?
- What geographic location do you prefer?
- Do you prefer a rural, small town, suburban, or urban setting?
- Do you prefer a coeducational or a single sex institution?
- What will your expenses be and how much can you afford to spend? (This should not be the sole determinant, though; some higher-cost institutions have more generous financial packages.)
- Will you need financial aid? Work-study programs? Full- or part-time employment?
- Do you prefer a religious, private, or public college experience?
- Do you prefer a multifaceted research university or a small liberal arts college?
- What special programs interest you?
- What type of housing do you require?
- What type of student activities are you interested in?
- What athletic programs interest you?
- What type of social environment do you prefer?
- What type of medical and other support services are available?
- Are there many international (U.S. or other nationals) students on campus?

- Are there any organizations such as Global Nomads for students who grew up abroad?

Once the student has a general idea of the type of school s/he is interested in, the next step is to match the list of desired characteristics with the colleges that satisfy them. One or more of the *guidebooks* listed below can be an invaluable aid. Other good sources of information are high school guidance counselors, teachers, and professionals in the desired career field.

*College catalogs* are the definitive source of information about admissions, student life, academic offerings, costs, and financial aid. Visiting the campus, preferably during the school year, is important to assure an appropriate student/school match. If requested in advance, many colleges will schedule campus tours and can arrange for the applicant to spend the night in campus housing. Colleges often provide an interested student with the names of recent graduates or current students who live nearby and are willing to discuss the college.

While it is not necessary to choose a career before starting college, it often helps to become better informed about the world of work while thinking about colleges. The student can then match fields of interest with schools having strong departments in those areas. The Department of Labor's *Occupational Handbook* offers useful information about the best preparation for different occupations.

Note that the statistical information in the guidebooks and the data used to produce annual rankings of schools is mostly self-reported by the colleges. A *Wall Street Journal* article (April 5, 1995) showed how admissions offices manipulate data, particularly in the reporting of test scores, percentage of applicants admitted, and graduation rates. *U.S. News and World Report* announced plans to revise its rankings, placing more emphasis on academic reputation. Even if the formulas for calculating college rankings are revised, the best approach is to remain skeptical. Educators prefer that prospective students take time to evaluate college choices to find the best academic and social match for the individual.

Students living overseas must begin the college selection process earlier than their peers in the United States. As early as the 9th or 10th grade, they should begin using home leave and family vacations in the United States to visit colleges. They should also seek out alumni at post and, if possible, attend school-sponsored college fairs to gather as much information as possible.

## RESOURCES

Available from Barron's Educational Series. See Ch 6, p 37 for contact information.

### *Profiles of American Colleges*

This book has a checklist that allows a student to quickly mark schools that meet her/his criteria.

### *Compact Guide to Colleges*

This is relatively inexpensive and easy to carry. All of Barron's publications provide a more informal look at institutions.

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*Choosing A College: The Student's Step-by-step Decision Making Workbook*

This workbook provides assistance to students at the beginning of their college search to help find what it is they want in their college experience and where best to go to find those criteria that are important.

*The College Handbook*

Published annually, this is an authoritative guide to 3,000 2- and 4-year colleges. It includes information on more areas of interest than any other handbook including enrollment, freshman class profiles, campus locations, majors, special academic programs, freshman and transfer admission, tuition and fees, financial aid, student activities, athletics, housing, and an index of majors. It is particularly helpful for those interested in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sports.

Available from

Octameron Press

PO Box 2748

Alexandria, VA 22301

Telephone: 703-836-5480

Fax: 703-836-5650

*College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School For You*

This publication has interactive worksheets to help students discover personal and academic needs and how to find colleges that meet those needs.

Available from Peterson's Guides. See Ch 5, p. 18 for contact information.

*Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges*

Published annually, this book spans majors in 435 fields and the colleges that offer them. The information is arranged in two sections. The first contains detailed factual profiles of colleges including background facts, enrollment figures, faculty size, admission and graduation requirements, expenses, financing, special programs, career services, housing, campus life and student services, sports, majors, and degrees. That information is provided by college admissions directors in response to Peterson's Annual Survey of Undergraduate Institutions. Schools pay to be in the second section of the book. It focuses more on quality of life, including campus environment, student activities, and life-style. Each two page description is prepared by officials of the school it covers.

Available from

*U.S. News and World Report*

2400 N Street NW

Washington, DC 20037

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Telephone: 202-955-2000

*America's Best*

This is a special section of the magazine published annually in October. It describes the top 125 schools rated by student selectivity, faculty quality, and academic resources. Schools are ranked as national universities, national liberal arts colleges, comprehensive colleges, small comprehensive colleges, and regional liberal arts colleges. You can order reprints of the most recent article.

*America's Best Colleges*

This annual separate publication reprints stories from the special report as well as including a comprehensive directory of more than 1,300 schools across the nation.

Available from

Time, Inc.

PO Box 30626

Tampa, FLA 33630-0626

*Money Guide: Best College Buys*

An annual publication from the editors of *Money Magazine*, this guide analyzes the costs and programs at 1,010 four-year schools.

Check your library or bookstore for the following books.

*Comparative Guide To American Colleges* by James Cass and Max Birnbaum

This guide takes a slightly different approach to college selection based on original research and data from student leaders, college presidents, and deans of students. Contains often quoted "Selective Index" as well as specific information on current costs, scholarships and loans, admissions requirements, academic opportunities and special programs, intellectual, social, and cultural environments, computer programs, facilities, and religious and racial composition of student body.

*The Fiske Guide to College* by Edward B. Fiske

Compiled by the former educational editor of *The New York Times*, this book presents a broad picture of life on campus of more than 300 colleges and universities. It ranks institutions on a scale of 1 to 5 on academics, social life, and quality of life. It is updated annually.

*The Insider's Guide to the Colleges* by the staff of the *Yale Daily News*

Students from coast to coast tell what their colleges are really like, particularly the social setting; readers must remember, however, that these are subjective opinions. Includes advice on how to impress interviewers, how to score points on the essay, and how to make an application stand out. It is best used in conjunction with a more standard guidebook.

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

*Lovejoy's College Guide* edited by Charles T. Straughn and Barbarasue Lovejoy  
This book provides an index to majors and entry requirements at 2- and 4-year colleges plus information on 500 careers that correspond to university curricula, ports scholarships, and SAT score profiles. Contains a good selection on financial aid including where to write for the most up-to-date information on government student loan programs.

### **THE COLLEGE SEARCH SERVICE AND INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS**

The College Board's *Student Search Service* (SSS) provides colleges with the names of students whose academic background and interests match the ones that colleges want. The service is free to students who answer the appropriate questions when taking the PSAT/NMSQT, the AP exams, or the SAT I or II. Colleges using the SSS specify the characteristics they seek in prospective students -- intended major, high school grade average, ethnic background, test score ranges, and/or geographic location. The names and addresses of students identified by the services are sent to the college, which then informs those students directly about the opportunities offered by the college.

Many high school guidance offices have computerized college search services to help college-bound high school students identify which schools most closely match the criteria they are seeking. Inexpensive software for use on a home computer is also available. In either case, a participant completes a personal profile and rates the many factors of her/his ideal college. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the profile is that it forces the student to consider aspects of college life such as type of dorm, student activities and sports, visitation rights, holidays, and even school policy concerning use of alcohol and other drugs. The student's preferences are compared with profiles of institutions around the country, and the student receives a list of colleges along with brief sketches about each school.

*Independent college consultants* are particularly helpful for prospective college students who are problematic. They provide an independent perspective to your child's strengths, weaknesses, and needs, and help cut the parental involvement, both time and emotional, in the process. Consultants can guide students to appropriate options often unknown to parents. Their services range from limited advisory service of 5-7 hours to complete service assistance including review of applications, advice on essay-writing, and coaching on interviews. Some also specialize in financial aid or career planning. In the Washington area, college consultant service costs between \$400-\$1300; nationwide the fees are higher. Parents who use these advisors like the personal attention and the consultant's ability to make sense of the confusing range of choices.

The Education and Youth Officer in the Family Liaison Office will provide referrals to private educational consultants upon request. Lists of qualified consultants can also be obtained from Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA) or

Association of Consultants and Counselors for Educational Services and Support (ACCESS). See Ch 6, pp 31 and 32 for contact information.

## **COLLEGE ADMISSION TIMETABLE**

The College Board recommends the following timetable, for the student in the United States. Overseas students must begin each process earlier (see p 20 below), taking advantage of home leave or other U.S. leave to begin visiting campuses. Consider purchasing a loose leaf notebook with dividers and pockets for each of the time periods below.

### ***Before Junior Year:***

- Plan high school schedule. Guidance counselors and the College Board's *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do* (see Chapter 12, page 6) can assist.
- Decide which extracurricular activities you want to participate in.
- Take SAT II (formerly Achievement Tests) and Advanced Placement Tests as soon as possible after completing the last course in the subject. Keep SAT II dates in mind and plan accordingly.
- Decide exactly what name will be used on all test and application forms. Be consistent.
- Use your Social Security number on college and financial aid applications.

### ***Junior Year:***

- Develop lists of interests, educational priorities, special talents and abilities, social and cultural preferences, and personal qualities. List what you would like to do in college, ranking the items in order of importance.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT. Be sure to sign up for the free Student Search Service.
- Obtain dates and places of local college fairs; try to attend at least one fair and talk to college representatives.
- Start saving college money through part-time work. Most colleges expect students receiving financial aid to contribute to their freshman year expenses in addition to what their parents provide.
- Begin to identify possible colleges based on size, type of school, location, fields of study, academic quality, cost, social environment, and special opportunities.
- As soon as you identify a college, request an application package and information about visiting the campus. If possible, call or fax rather than write.
- Begin thinking about college costs and financial aid. Use Chapter 15 as a guide. Talk to your parents to set realistic expectations. A favored college, however, should not be discarded because of high tuition. Many private institutions have potential for strong financial aid packages. Investigate private student aid and

scholarship programs, but note that many private programs have earlier deadlines than major government programs. Check newspapers to find out which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award financial aid. Start a file.

- Register for AP and CLEP tests if applicable.
- By April, develop a preliminary list of colleges. If possible, arrange to visit each school. If the school requires an interview, make arrangements. Review the discussion of interview suggestions on page 19 of this chapter.
- Learn how to calculate your grade-point average or ratio, how your school determines class rank, and where you stand.
- Identify teachers, administrators, and other adults who could write letters of recommendation. If you are leaving the U.S. or an overseas post, get letters before leaving and/or teachers' forwarding addresses. Try to make college visits in conjunction with any summer/holiday travels.

### ***Senior Year:***

#### ***September:***

- Reduce your college list to 5-10 schools. Make sure you have current catalogs, application forms, and financial aid information for each. At a minimum, consider three schools: a stretch, your first realistic choice, and a safety.
- Decide if you wish to apply for special admissions (see pp 25 and 26).
- Make a checklist of test names and registration deadlines, fees, test dates, college application deadlines, and applications and deadlines for financial aid.
- Plan to take the SAT or ACT admissions tests 6-8 weeks before you must submit scores to the colleges.

#### ***October:***

- Write college essays. The essay is a crucial part of most applications and deserves special attention. Give yourself enough time to develop an outline, write, and revise until you are satisfied. This is a good opportunity to draw attention to your application by emphasizing your overseas experience.
- Ask appropriate teachers and other adults for letters of recommendation. Provide a description of your academic record and extracurricular activities and an addressed, stamped envelope with the forms.

#### ***November:***

- Make sure you have appropriate financial aid forms: the Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or whatever needs analysis documents or application the colleges require. Parents should be gathering tax records, as this information is necessary to fill out financial aid forms. *These forms must also be completed for some of the loan programs.*

- Submit applications for early decision, early action, or rolling admission candidacy. If you are applying for *early decision* or *early action*, you will have to complete essays earlier than December.
- Give the forms requesting your high school grades to the counselor at least 2 weeks before colleges require them if applying from the United States - 8 weeks if applying from overseas.

***December:***

- Complete essays. They should be typed, clean, neat, attractive, grammatically correct, interesting, and easy-to-read. Keep copies.
- December 15th is the deadline for some selective colleges. Be sure to apply on time. Early decision and early action decisions are announced now. If you are not accepted, make sure other applications are ready to go.
- Work on financial aid forms. Make sure they are complete, accurate, and legible. *Do not mail them until January. If you are overseas, mail them to arrive in early January.*

***January:***

- Sign and date your financial aid applications and send them as soon as possible after January 1.

***February:***

- All men who are 18 years old or over must register for the draft and must be able to prove it when applying for Federal government financial aid.

***March:***

- Apply for AP, SAT II, and/or CLEP examinations in your strongest subjects.
- Complete applications for colleges with April deadlines.

***April:***

- Most selective colleges announce their decisions this month. Weigh offers against the factors that are important to you.

***May:***

- May 1 is the final date for announcing your choice of colleges.
- If you are put on the waiting list, call, visit, or write to the Admissions Director to ask how to strengthen your application. Indicate when the school is your first choice.
- Advanced Placement examinations are given nationwide in May.

**RESOURCES**

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*College Board Notebook*

*Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able To Do*

## **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

There are six main components to the college admission folder: the application, the academic record, the test scores, school and teacher recommendations, activities, and the personal factor which is represented by the essay, and/or the personal interview and sometimes a parent's assessment. During the entire application process, it is vital that you keep all relevant papers together in an easily accessible place. Consider *The College Board's Notebook* or something similar. Test score reports, application instruction sheets, and information and correspondence from colleges may all be necessary at one point or another. Keep complete and accurate records of everything associated with the application process. Record all deadlines on a calendar and consult it frequently.

The **application** includes simple biographical information such as name, current address, birth date, and parents' names. More than 350 colleges now accept the *Common Application*. With this application you need to complete the form once and make photocopies for submission to each college. The College Board's *College Handbook* lists all colleges that accept this application.

The **academic record** (or transcript) includes your specific courses and grades received. A class rank, indicating the student's competitiveness in relation to his/her peers, is often included. Most colleges will also monitor 2nd semester senior grades, so don't let down after college acceptance.

The emphasis placed on **test scores** depends upon the college's policy. Usually, the larger the college, the more important the scores are. But in all cases, test scores form only part of the application profile; poor test scores do not necessarily exclude a student and good scores do not always guarantee admission.

**Teacher recommendations** discuss classroom performance that is not represented by the grades; the official school recommendation or statement is also an important part of the folder.

## **ESSAY WRITING TIPS**

Any **essay** is an attempt to convince the reader that an idea or opinion is correct. The college application essay should expand on information that the college has received about the student and provide *information that does not appear* in grades, test scores, and other materials. The student should choose from the list of essay topics, one that will reveal his/her intelligence, talent, sense of humor, enthusiasm, maturity, and creativity, as well as other factors such as a Foreign Service background. Because of today's emphasis on diversity, that

background may be the factor that makes an application look different from other students' applications.

Write an individual essay for each college. Make sure you understand the college's topics, directions, and deadlines. Check the catalog for descriptions of the personal qualities the school is looking for and make sure the essay reflects those qualities. For reference, make a list of your civic and school activities, travels, awards, honors, other accomplishments, work experiences, and any academic or personal shortcomings you are trying to overcome. For open-ended essays, develop a one-sentence theme from this list.

Write a first draft and check it for clichés, vagueness, grammatical errors, misspellings, or confusion. Rewrite the essay and check again. Ask someone whose opinion you respect to read the essay for clarity and interest but *do not let this person rewrite your essay*. Rework the essay yourself, then read it aloud to find rough spots, awkward phrasing, inaccurate usage and/or unnecessary words. Type the essay unless the college requires a handwritten version, and proofread it carefully. Mail the essay on time. If overseas, allow extra time for possible mail and postmark delays.

## **COLLEGE VISITS**

Visiting colleges provides an opportunity to learn about those intangible factors that make each school so different. Prospective students can browse through the bookstore, the student center, the library, the dorms, and the sports facilities. They can eat in a dining hall, read bulletin boards, and talk with students and faculty members. Colleges welcome prospective students, and campus tours are available most of the year, often without any appointment. Most of the larger schools schedule group admissions meetings that give students and parents a chance to ask questions. Tour guides are usually undergraduates, and talking with them can provide important information.

Before visiting, students should call or write the school to find out the tour schedule and to make sure classes are in session - the flavor of a school is very different if there are no students on campus or during summer school when there are fewer students. Many schools will allow a prospective student to spend the night in a dorm, eat in the dining hall, and attend classes if arrangements are made in advance. If the school has no formal arrangement, and you know a student, try to arrange this informally. If you have a special talent or interest and wish to meet with someone who oversees that area, make these arrangements when you call. If possible, avoid scheduling visits during exam weeks or between March 15 and April 15 when Admissions Offices are frantically trying to make decisions on the current high school applicants.

Try not to schedule more than two college visits per day or more than five or six per trip. Impressions will blur and fatigue will make even the most wonderful college pale.

## **THE INTERVIEW**

A *personal interview* is the student's opportunity to find out more about the college and to make a favorable impression on those who will review his/her application. However, Foreign Service students applying to college from abroad need not feel disadvantaged because they are not able to participate in college interviews. According to *The New York Times*, the campus interview has become irrelevant to most student's chances of acceptance. Although many colleges still grant interviews, few require them or use them as a significant part of the evaluation procedure. If you interview well, however, the interviewer's enthusiasm might tip the balance in the school's admission process.

If required, interview appointments must be scheduled in advance (selective colleges are often completely booked by September). Usually, students interview only at those schools to which they plan to apply. Of course, if the student is visiting a college a great distance from home, it makes sense to schedule the interview at the same time as the college visit.

Students should be early for the interview appointment. Fifteen extra minutes allow you to get your bearings and unwind a bit. It is also important to dress appropriately - no socks or too much jewelry can give the wrong impression. Prospective students should dress comfortably but not draw inordinate attention to themselves. Interviews usually last about 45 minutes but sometimes run longer. Afterward, the admissions officer makes a written evaluation which becomes part of the admissions folder.

The student should prepare specific questions in advance about the college's programs, facilities, and any other topic not covered in materials received from school. Broad questions about the college's stand on social issues or its philosophy about career preparation are certainly appropriate. The student should also be prepared to talk about him/herself and explain why s/he may want to attend this particular college. After the interview, if there are subsequent questions about the application process or the status of your application, don't hesitate to call or write. Interviewers are always glad to help, and the subsequent contact reminds them of your interest in being admitted to the college.

Most colleges have local alumni representatives who can give interviews and answer questions, overseas as well as in the United States. Alumni interviewers are not paid professionals, but they have a genuine interest in attracting intelligent and worthy young people to their college. When meeting with alumni representatives, the student should ask questions that are analytical rather than descriptive. Remember that the on-campus experience of alumni interviewers may be dated. This interview should be taken as seriously as any other part of the application process.

## **THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

Once a candidate's folder is complete, it is usually read by at least two staff members and evaluated on a number or letter scale. The admissions committee then makes a preliminary decision. Candidates who are not up to the minimum standards are put in one

group and not admitted. The clearly acceptable candidates are placed in another group for admission. The admissions committee then focuses on the third group, either discussing each candidate in turn or dividing into subcommittees to read each folder again. The committee distinguishes between candidates with similar records and recommendations by measuring intangible qualities such as intensity, commitment, awareness, and perceptiveness. This is where a favorable interview may help. They are also looking for creativity, vitality, character, and humor. In some years they may be particularly interested in some special skill or interest, possibly overseas experience. After rank ordering this middle group, the committee fills the available spaces.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from Octamer Press. See Ch 13, p 5 for contact information.

*Behind the Scenes: An Inside Look at the Selective College Admission Process*

*Campus Pursuit: How To Make the Most of the College Visit and Interview*

*The College Guide for Parents*

*Do It - Write: How to Prepare a Great College Application*

*Scaling the Ivy Wall: 12 Winning Steps to College Admission*

Available from Peterson's Guides. See Ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

*The Admissions Process at Selective Colleges*

*The Campus Visit*

*The College Application Essay*

*The College Interview*

*The College Recommendation*

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29.

*Your College Application*

*Writing Your College Application Essay*

*Writing Your College Application Essay* (audiotape)

## **APPLYING TO COLLEGE FROM OVERSEAS**

The Office of Overseas Schools (A/OS) and the College Board have established a project to provide accurate information and sound advice to American overseas schools and to their students applying to U.S. colleges. Under this project, college admissions officials and educational experts visit overseas school staff. Professional development workshops are provided for overseas counselors, and information on overseas schools is produced and disseminated to colleges and universities. Further information is available from:

Overseas School Project  
Office of International Education

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076

Fax: (202) 647-1670

The College Board, Suite 402  
1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202-332-1480

Timing is a critical factor for overseas students applying to college. Deadline dates for applications and tests vary widely, and it is extremely important to meet all deadlines. Because mail delivery at some posts is irregular, overseas students should write for materials as soon as possible. Enclosing stamped, self-addressed envelopes might speed the turn-around time. It is crucial that applicants clearly identify themselves as *Americans* living overseas so that they do not receive foreign student materials by mistake.

Overseas students may have an advantage in the college application process if college administrators recognize that this experience is a broadening and maturing one for the student. Overseas students should capitalize on this by clearly indicating on the application how their experiences abroad have enriched them through their exposure to foreign languages and cultures. Many colleges will look for evidence of an applicant's participation in activities with citizens of a foreign country rather than just with other Americans.

Students applying from overseas do have special problems. It is often inconvenient to visit many colleges, but many colleges now have videotapes that can be borrowed or purchased from the institution. If the student has lived abroad for a number of years, colleges and college lifestyles may be difficult to understand. On the plus side, overseas students have usually had more experiences in adjusting to new environments and should settle into college more easily than some of their U.S. counterparts.

A disadvantage some Foreign Service families have found is the limited number of Advanced Placement or honors courses available in overseas schools. Such courses are so widely available in the United States that their absence on a student's transcript is immediately noted. It is possible to use the Supplemental Allowance to set up an AP course in an overseas school. Credits in an International Baccalaureate program also enhance a student's transcript.

### **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

One question that comes up frequently when discussing college attendance for the Foreign Service teen is residency requirements for state colleges and universities. Because they often do not duplicate residency requirements for taxes or voting, it is important for overseas students planning to attend a state school to write to the appropriate state office requesting information on residency requirements early in their junior year of high school. Because of the potential for change in residency requirements, students should check just before enrolling in a school and be sure to ask if there are any changes being discussed for the future.

*Guide to State Residency Requirements* contains information on residency requirements for public colleges and universities in the United States with regard to admission and in-state tuition. The guide describes the general residency rules employed by representative institutions in each of the 50 states and is available in Family Liaison Office and in many CLO offices. The FLO Education and Youth Officer can also provide the specific addresses of state education offices.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*College Entrance Guide for American Students Overseas*

*Guide to State Residency Requirements and Practices at Selected Public Institutions in the United States*

## **SPECIAL ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

Many colleges have special admissions policies that provide advance decisions to outstanding students. **Early Admission** is reserved for exceptional high school juniors whose academic preparation and achievement level are sufficient for early entrance to college. Some schools provide an **Early Decision**. Students who accept an Early Decision cannot change their minds. The student applies to her/his first-choice college early in the fall and usually receives an answer by mid-December. **An application for early decision means that the student is committed to attend the college if accepted.** Early decision applicants are judged on their junior year test scores, class rank, and grades. If a student is denied early decision, the application will be reconsidered as if s/he had never applied before. This is a valid option for the student who is really sure which college is her/his first choice; it has the advantage of curtailing the long admissions process.

A few selective colleges use an **Early Action** process. The application is evaluated and either denied, accepted, or deferred. If it is denied, the student will not be admitted. If it is accepted, the student has until May to make a decision. If the application is deferred, the final decision will be made when regular applications are evaluated in April. **In applying for early action, the student is not required to enroll if selected.** It is important that any student interested in early decision or early action read the instructions from the college carefully since the programs may vary.

**Rolling Admissions** is a procedure that allows colleges to accept qualified applicants as their applications are received. The colleges continually review applications until their class enrollment is filled. Highly competitive colleges rarely use rolling admissions.

## CHAPTER 14 POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

### **ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMS**

Two year programs leading to associate (A.A.) degrees constitute a large part of American higher education. These programs, offered by junior colleges or community colleges, are usually one of two types. In traditional *academic or transfer programs*, students complete the first 2 years of a 4-year program and then transfer to a 4-year institution to complete their degree. In *terminal or occupational programs*, students study a semi-professional or technical specialty such as auxiliary health services, law enforcement, computer programming, cosmetology, or stenography.

It is usually easier to be admitted to community colleges than to other post-secondary institutions. Community colleges are also less expensive. Dormitory facilities are available at most 2-year colleges but not at community colleges.

### **VOCATIONAL AND TRADE SCHOOLS**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an increasing number of future jobs will require some type of trade or technical training. Eight thousand private trade and technical schools in the United States offer solid training in more than 100 occupations. Many of these are very good institutions; some, however, are profit-making businesses and do not deliver what is promised. These proprietary trade and technical schools focus on career preparation; training is condensed so that only essential courses are given. Programs vary greatly but include such fields as systems analysis, programming and operations, office machine repair, civil engineering technology, computer programming, food preparation, health care technology, and legal assistance. Technical schools can be small independently owned schools specializing in one type of training program, 2-year community colleges offering technical degrees, or chains of schools owned by giant corporations.

Foreign Service students should be aware that the State Department regulations define a college education as *attendance for a full program at the undergraduate level at a university or college, including 2-year junior or community colleges, located in the United States, offering academic courses leading to a degree.* (Emphasis added.) If a student attends a school which does not offer an academic degree, s/he will not be eligible for the educational travel allowance.

A student interested in a trade or technical school should write to several schools offering the program s/he wants and then carefully compare catalogs. The school should have adequate facilities, up-to-date equipment, qualified instructors, and a good job placement program. Visits to the campus are as important as when choosing a college. Some questions to ask are:

- What are the facilities like?

- Are the students enthusiastic about their program?
- Are dorms or other housing facilities available?
- Is it possible to talk to an instructor about the program?
- Does the school have a laboratory or shop setup that duplicates a real work environment?
- Are lab fees and equipment costs spelled out?
- What is the policy concerning withdrawal before completion?
- What percentage of students actually finish the program?

Good vocational and trade schools are licensed by the state in which they are located and accredited by an independent accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation means the school's educational quality, teaching ability, and administrative integrity have been thoroughly examined. Among the accrediting agencies are the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, and National Home Study Council.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from *Peterson's Guides*. See Ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

### *Careers Without College Series*

These books outline the specific skills, abilities, and interests that make someone "right" for each type of job. There is a book on each of the following career fields: health care, computers, cars, fitness, and building.

### *Technical, Trade and Business Schools Data Handbook*

This complete vocational school directory is published in regional editions. It provides profiles of some 1,250 accredited vocational schools. The profiles cover admissions, accreditation, programs offered, resources and facilities, student services, enrollment, tuition and fees, financial aid, housing, transportation, extracurricular activities, and local environment. Name, address, admissions, and course offerings are listed for another 2,060 accredited schools.

## **TAKING A YEAR OFF - ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS**

Some students are just not ready to start college the fall after completing high school. This is sometimes true for students who have gone through the admissions process as well as those who have decided earlier on that they want to take a year off from school. Realistically speaking, some students aren't ready yet for the academic focus, and, in fact, do better with the break. Or, they have been at boarding school and feel the need to spend some time at home with their parents.

## ***ACCOMPANYING THE FAMILY TO AN OVERSEAS POST***

In some instances, families are due to go overseas on a posting, and the student wants to share that experience. This can work if the situation is carefully researched with a definite activity for the year in mind. It is possible that the student may be able to work part-time at the Embassy, but that should be checked before going to post. It is also possible that the student could study the language of the country or even attend a local or American branch of a university overseas. The abiding rule, whether the student is going to accompany the family on a posting or whether the student chooses to do something else for the academic year, is that the year should involve well-planned and documentable activities.

## ***DEFERRED COLLEGE ADMISSION***

College admissions personnel point out that they look to see if the alternative activity for the year is one that provides for growth and maturity of the student. When that is true, some colleges will defer admission for a year. The alternative year should provide a learning experience and may include a number of activities, some that provide financial gain but perhaps are interspersed with volunteer, travel, or other educational-type activities.

## ***POST GRADUATE (PG) YEAR***

Getting into the college of one's choice is not guaranteed. The student may not have received the grades necessary for some institutions, may have skipped some college preparatory classes, or may want an extra year of athletic eligibility in order to qualify for an athletic scholarship. For any of these reasons, enrollment in a post graduate year will provide the opportunity to raise your grade point average, to take advanced classes not available or not taken at the graduating high school, or to have an extra year of supervised activities. Keep in mind, however, that the educational allowance will not normally cover a 13th year of secondary school.

## ***ORGANIZED PROGRAMS***

There are several organizations that help develop youth-specific interim year programs. Some of these involve a number of activities and can include overseas excursions. Others are located in one place but involve several activities and provide a semi-supervised living environment.

The Family Liaison Office's Education and Youth Officer is available to discuss alternatives and can provide referrals to families considering alternative programs.

## ***RESOURCES***

Contact the following organizations for information about their programs.

Family Liaison Office  
Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

***Bridgton Academy***

North Bridgton, Maine 04057-0292

Telephone: 207-647-3322

Offers a specific program for postgraduate boys.

***Center for Interim Programs***

PO Box 2347

Cambridge, MA 02238

Telephone: 617-547-0980

***The Dynamy Year***

27 Sever Street

Worcester, MA 01609

Telephone: 508-755-2571

Program offers a series of internships, apartment living, individual advising, outdoor challenge program, and community involvement.

***Horizons Program***

University of Alabama

157 Education Building

901 South 13th Street

Birmingham, AL 35294-1250

Telephone: 205-975-6770

College-based, non-degree, apartment-living program for learning disabled.

***World Learning***

PO Box 676

Brattleboro, VT 05302

Telephone: 802-257-7751

Individualized program organization for students to spend a year living, studying, and/or working abroad.

***CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS***

Correspondence study is individual instruction by mail. It is flexible, convenient, and personalized. Students enroll at any time, study at home, and set their own pace. Work is done on a one-to-one basis with faculty experts who design instructional materials, guide course study, and prepare specific responses to submitted work.

Credit earned in correspondence study taken at a regionally accredited institution is normally transferable from one institution to another. However, since policies and degree requirements vary among colleges and universities, students are urged to consult appropriate

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officials of the institution from which they expect to receive a degree to find out where credit is transferable.

The cost associated with taking correspondence courses varies from course to course and from college to college. Tuition is often a set amount per credit hour. Students bear the cost for postage on items that they mail, and some institutions levy a postage fee for items such as course materials and returned assignments that are mailed to their students. Students should usually be able to use the pouch or military post office for the correspondence materials to and from the institutions. When possible, students going to foreign countries should enroll before they leave the United States, taking their textbooks, and course materials with them in order to avoid postage and customs expenses. An institution's catalog will identify policies and costs for foreign enrollments.

The Family Liaison Office has information on colleges and universities offering a wide range of high school, college, graduate, and non-credit courses by correspondence.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from Graduate School, United States Department of Agriculture. See ch 5, p 22 for contact information.

### *Correspondence Program*

Available from *Peterson's Guides*. See ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

### *The Electronic University Course Telecommunications*

Describes professional certificate and four year degree programs in video, satellite transmission, cable and broadcast TV, computer via modem, or other electronic means.

### *The Independent Study Catalog*

Available from University of Nebraska. See ch 5, p 22 for contact information.

### *College Independent Study Bulletin*

Lists credit and non-credit courses.

## **ATTENDING COLLEGE OVERSEAS**

Many overseas posts offer a variety of educational opportunities for college and graduate study. The University of Maryland, Beaver College, the City Colleges of Chicago, and many other institutions offer programs at many posts abroad (often located near U.S. military installations). Many U.S. colleges have junior year abroad programs. In addition, local universities will often accept American students if language is not a barrier. Taking advanced language studies is possible at most posts.

The National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA) provides prospective students with registration forms and catalogs describing courses offered. Contact them at:

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

NUCEA  
Suite 615  
One Dupont Circle NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202-659-3130

## RESOURCES

Available from Peterson's Guides. See ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

*Independent Study Catalog*  
*Study Abroad*

Available from  
Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET)  
3 Loudoun Street SE  
Leesburg, VA 22075  
Telephone: 703-771-2040  
Fax: 703-771-2046

*Advisory List of International Educational Travel and Exchange Programs*  
This book offers a chart for easy comparison of 55 programs. Each program is also described in a two page write-up.

Check the library for these books:

*Study Abroad, The Astute Student's Guide* by David Judkins  
*The Insiders Guide to Foreign Study* by Benedict A. Leerburger

## CHAPTER 15 MEETING COLLEGE COSTS

Financial aid has become increasingly complex as it has become more widely used. Today half of all undergraduate students receive some form of financial assistance. Despite the growing costs of higher education, though, the majority of students attend state institutions where the college bill is still under \$10,000 a year.

Families should apply for financial aid, even if they think they won't qualify. Many upper middle income families have become eligible for federal assistance, particularly federal government low interest loan programs which cannot be accessed until application has been made. In addition, being denied federal student aid often opens the door to other financial assistance.

Financial aid is designed to help those students without adequate financial resources to meet college costs. Broadly defined, costs include not only tuition, fees, and books, but also personal living expenses and travel to and from school. Financial aid is available at 2- and 4-year institutions and also at many vocational and trade schools.

In applying for financial aid, it is best if students and parents work closely with a high school counselor who is familiar with the various types of financial aid, has the reference books on hand, and can offer good advice. Sometimes, however, Foreign Service families are abroad in posts where knowledgeable assistance is not available. In that case, the family should obtain appropriate books from the resource lists in this chapter and consider contacting an educational consultant knowledgeable on financial aid. College financial aid offices will also provide financial advice and full information about their private and public sources of assistance, their packages that combine sources, and their required application forms.

It is important to note that information on financial aid changes from year to year, so resources need to be recently published or revised. Parents and students must ensure that they have *up-to-date* information on types of aid available and requirements. Low-interest loans are available to most students. The most recent annual copy of *Don't Miss Out* and *The Federal Guide to Student Aid* will have up-to-date information.

There are special circumstances that may affect eligibility for financial aid. One is if you have more than one family member in college. This will adjust the Expected Family Contribution to college costs downward. The other is when parents are divorced or separated. In that situation, students use income and assets of the parent with whom they lived for the greater part of the 12 months preceding application, including, if that parent has remarried, the stepparent's income/assets.

For financial aid purposes, the difference between dependent and independent students is important. *Dependent* students are those who are partially dependent upon parents for support. The income and assets of both are considered when determining financial aid. To qualify for federal funds, an *independent* student must fulfill *one* of the following conditions:

- Be 24 years old by December 31 of the award year or be declared independent at the discretion of the school's financial aid officer;
- Be an orphan, ward of the court, or a veteran of the Armed Services;
- Have a legal dependent other than a spouse;
- Be married, a professional, or a graduate student not claimed as a tax exemption by anyone else;
- **Or** be so judged by a school's Financial Aid Officer on the basis of documentation of unusual circumstances.

Private colleges may also ask for documentation of parents' resources before awarding their funding.

### **TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID**

Colleges provide eligible students with a financial aid package made up of a combination of scholarships, grants, loans, and employment. **Scholarships and grants** are funds which do not have to be repaid. Grants are given on the basis of need, scholarships for need or merit. Educational **loans** carry lower interest rates than commercial loans and generally do not have to be repaid until the student leaves school. Part-time or full-time **work aid** is usually arranged for the student by the college. ***It should be noted that all male student financial aid applicants must be registered for the draft.***

### **DETERMINING FINANCIAL NEED**

Whether a student is eligible for financial aid can be determined by taking the total college costs and subtracting what the student and his/her family can pay. The following costs should be estimated for a 9-month period for each school the student is interested in:

- Tuition and fees
- Books and supplies
- Student's room and board/meals, even if student lives at home
- Clothing, laundry, recreation, and medical expenses
- Transportation
- Special costs such as child care, ongoing medical expenses, or expenses related to a handicap

A process called **need analysis** determines how much the student and his/her parents can pay. Families provide financial information about themselves on a need analysis document obtained from high school guidance counselors or from college financial aid offices (some colleges have their own forms). These forms may also be available at the Community Liaison Office at post. Families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or whatever financial aid document a school requires as soon as possible after January 1 of the year in which their student will be attending college that fall.

The schools designated on the form by the prospective student receive the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number which is processed centrally. It is based primarily on parental income, the family's assets (savings, home ownership), student income, and student assets. In general, it is expected that a greater percentage of the prospective student's assets (currently 35%) than the parents' assets (currently 5.6%) should be contributed. However, a family's expenses are also considered, and large debts, unusual expenses, and the age of the older parent can make a significant difference. Students are expected to contribute toward their own college expenses whenever possible. The EFC will only include student earnings above \$1,750 (after taxes), but individual colleges usually project their own assessments based on geographic area and family finances.

When the colleges receive the student's EFC number, they then work up a financial aid package of grants, loans, and work that will meet the student's financial needs at their school. If the family has no financial need, but the school wants the student, they usually recommend one of the federal non-need based programs to help manage its cash flow, or they may offer college-based funding.

### ***EARLY FINANCIAL AID PLANNING***

Families should apply for financial aid for the following academic year as soon as possible after January 1. All applicants must file the FAFSA; some colleges may require other applications as well. Reapplication must be made each year.

It is important to file early and accurately. Individual school money, in particular, often goes quickly, and anything that holds up an application can jeopardize that source. A file of all sources to back-up the application should be kept in a quickly-retrievable place. This is especially crucial if a move is being made during the financial aid application process.

### ***FINANCIAL AID CHECKLIST***

In addition to filling out the financial aid applications, students should use the following checklist to investigate other sources of assistance. Note that colleges often **reduce** the college aid package by the amount of a scholarship a student wins from an outside source, but the student may be able to negotiate not to have the aid package reduced.

- Investigate all possible sources of financial aid.
- Request financial aid information and appropriate forms when requesting college admission material, particularly information about each college's financial aid sources and their requirements for aid.
- Fill out financial aid applications completely as soon as possible.
- Keep careful track of all applications and deadlines.
- Respond promptly to any requests for additional information.
- Consider attending an in-state college or university or attending a community college for 1 or 2 years.

- Investigate loans that are forgivable upon completion of nursing or teaching experience.
- Investigate cooperative education - although it may take 5 years to finish, students can earn as much as \$8,000 a year working in their field of interest.
- Check on alternatives to financial aid, just in case.

## RESOURCES

Available from College Board. See ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*The College Cost Book*

Available from Octameron Press. See ch 13, p 5 for contact information.

*Leider's Lecture*

## FEDERAL, STATE, AND INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID

### Federal Programs

**It is important to note that programs and award amounts from the federal government are subject to congressional appropriations and may change. The information given here is meant as a guideline and families should carefully research current programs and amounts.**

*Pell Grants*, formerly called the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, are Federal government grant programs open to any U.S. citizen who has not attained a bachelor's degree and has demonstrated financial need. Colleges expect that *any student requesting financial aid will apply for a Pell Grant*. *State Grants* require that students attend an in-state college to qualify. Usually the FAFSA will link students with their home state's program.

*Need-Based Federal Stafford Loans* range from \$2,625 for a freshman to \$5,550 for a senior with a maximum total of \$23,000 for undergraduate education. These loans are also available for graduate school. The government pays the interest while the student is in school and for a grace period thereafter with repayment in 5-10 years. Stafford Loans are made by banks and credit unions, and students must file their own applications with the lender of their choice. These loans must be repaid in full. Eligibility for this program varies by family income level.

*Campus-Based Aid and Scholarships* supplement other programs. If the student still has need, the financial aid officer at the school will look at money to be awarded by the college. Included are:

*Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)* are from \$1,000 - \$4,000 and awarded to students with significant need.

*Federal Work-Study* (part-time jobs) is awarded as a dollar amount up to which the student may work.

*Perkins Loans* are low interest loans that allow students to borrow up to \$3,000 per year to a maximum of \$15,000 for undergraduate studies. They are also available for graduate students. The federal government pays the interest while the student is in school. A 5 percent interest rate is charged after completion of studies. In some cases, loan payments can be deferred, postponed, or cancelled.

*Scholarships are also awarded by the college* using its own funds for academics, band, talent, and athletic awards.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from

The American Legion

National Emblem Sales

PO Box 1050

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Telephone: 317-630-1200

*Need A Lift?*

Published annually by the American Legion this booklet gives general college aid information plus a list of scholarships available to students.

## **UNSUBSIDIZED FEDERAL LOANS**

All families are eligible for at least one of the following loans, despite family income or assets. They can be used to help with cash flow.

*Supplemental Loan to Students (SLS)* may be used by independent students to borrow up to \$4,000 - \$5,000 per year to a maximum of \$23,000. They are also available for graduate students, and students may defer repayment until after graduation but repayment begins shortly after the loan is processed. The FAFSA must be filed for eligibility for an SLS loan.

*Parents Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)* is a non-need based loan program for credit-worthy parents of dependent undergraduate students. They can borrow from local lending institutions at an interest rate the same as the SLS loans with repayment beginning 60 days after loan processing.

## **MILITARY AND OTHER AGENCY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Although more limited than previously, many colleges and universities have Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) units of the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force. These units offer opportunities for financial assistance in addition to officer commissions on graduation. Admissions requirements and programs vary from one service to another.

Some Foreign Service students may be eligible for programs sponsored by their parents' agencies. The Central Intelligence Agency has an undergraduate scholar program in

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engineering/science, partly need-based and with a work commitment. The National Security Agency has a merit-based program which includes summer work. The Defense Intelligence Agency has an Undergraduate Training Assistance Program (UTAP), a merit-based program. Contact the Family Liaison Office Education and Youth Officer for further information.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from  
ROTC Scholarships (AD)  
Fort Monroe, VA 23651-5000  
Telephone: 800-USA-ROTC

*Army ROTC: The Program, the Requirements, the Obligations, the Benefits*

Available from  
AFROTC/RRO  
551 East Maxwell Road  
Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6106  
Telephone: 334-953-7783

*Four-Year Scholarship: Applicant Instruction Bulletin*

Available from  
Navy-Marine NROTC Scholarship Program  
The Commander  
Navy Recruiting Command (Code 314)  
801 North Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203-9705  
Telephone: 800-USA-NAVY

*The Navy-Marine NROTC Scholarship Program Bulletin*

## **STATE FINANCIAL AID**

In addition to Federal government money, all states have scholarships or grant programs for residents, and some offer other programs based on need, merit, or a combination of the two. Some states also have reciprocity agreements with other states.

In Virginia and Maryland, the offices to contact for information and application forms are listed below. Enclose a self-addressed business-sized envelope with two letter-rate stamps attached.

### ***Virginia***

Council of Higher Education Loans and Grants  
101 North 14th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
ATTN: Coordinator of Financial Aid

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Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076  
Fax: (202) 647-1670

Telephone: 804-371-7941

***Maryland***

State Scholarship Board  
16 Francis Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Telephone: 410-974-5370

***INSTITUTIONAL AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS FINANCIAL AID FOR FOREIGN SERVICE CHILDREN***

***AAFSW/AFSA Merit and Financial Aid Scholarships.*** The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) and the Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW) offer both need-based financial aid grants of \$500 to \$2,500 with an aggregate family limit of \$5,000, and merit scholarships to qualified dependent children of Foreign Service personnel of the Foreign Affairs agencies. The financial aid grants are for full-time undergraduates studying in the United States and are based solely on need. Merit Awards of up to \$1,000 for high school seniors are based on academic achievements and leadership qualities. Complete information and application forms are available in October from the following address:

Scholarship Administrator  
AFSA  
2101 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
Telephone: 202-944-5504  
Fax: 202-338-6820

Overseas the application forms may be available in the Community Liaison Office.

In addition, AFSA administers the *Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship* of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation. These grants up to \$2,500 are for full-time rising junior or senior college students with a major in the field of foreign affairs who are academically worthy and deserving of support.

*Both programs are limited to the dependent children of American Foreign Service personnel who have served or are currently serving abroad with the Foreign Affairs agencies (State, AID, USIA, Agriculture, Commerce, and APHIS). Membership in AFSA, AAFSW, or DACOR is not a requirement.*

Three colleges offer scholarships to students who are children of Foreign Service personnel. They are:

***Dartmouth College: S. Pinkney Tuck Scholarship,*** need-based award for students who are *children or grandchildren* of Foreign Service personnel. Contact:

Director of Financial Aid  
Dartmouth College  
Hanover, NH 03755

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Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

Telephone: 603-646-1110

**Vassar College: Polly Richardson Luken Memorial Scholarship and the Gilan Scholarship Fund**, need-based for daughters with preference given to freshmen. Contact:

Director of Donor Relations

Vassar College, Box 14

Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Telephone: 914-437-5515

**Yale University:**

**For scholarship given by Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney**, recipients must demonstrate financial need.

**Louis Goethe Dreyfuss scholarships and fellowships** are offered by DACOR Bacon House Foundation to children of Foreign Service officers for study at Yale. Undergraduate awards are based on need; graduate students, regardless of need, are eligible to apply for a fellowship. Preference is given to those planning a career related to foreign affairs.

Contact:

Director of Financial Aid

Box 208288

New Haven, CT 06520-8288

Telephone: 203-432-0360

Fax: 203-432-0359

### **STATE DEPARTMENT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION (SDFCU) SCHOLARSHIPS**

The SDFCU Scholarship Fund distributes \$6,000 worth of scholarships to members who have completed their freshman year at an accredited institution of higher learning, achieved academic proficiency, and are in need of financial assistance to continue their education. Applications for this scholarship are available in February. Additional information can be obtained from the following address:

SDFCU Annual Scholarship

State Department Federal Credit Union

1630 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone: 703-706-5024

Fax: 703-684-1613

### **FEDERAL EMPLOYEE EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE FUND (FEEA)**

The FEEA awards scholarships to high school graduates and college students ranging from \$300 - \$1,750. Selection criteria include academic achievement, community service, a recommendation, and an essay. FEEA also offers low interest students loans. To obtain an application send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

FEEA Scholarship Program

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Room 1212A  
Department of State  
Washington, DC 20520

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Telephone: (202) 647-1076

Fax: (202) 647-1670

Suite 200  
8441 West Bowls Avenue  
Littleton, Colorado 80123-3245  
Telephone: 303-933-7580

### ***PREPAID TUITION AND OTHER COSTS***

Many states offer tuition savings plans to their residents in the form of *baccalaureate bonds*. Income from these bonds is exempt if used to pay for college. The College Savings Bank in Princeton sells CDs based on the average room, board, and fees of 500 independent colleges.

For-profit programs designed to help families save for college expenses appear on the market regularly. Some states offer prepaid tuition plans to help families meet college expenses. Either of these types of programs should be assessed carefully. Information about them is available from many sources, including certified financial planners, accountants, or college financial aid officers.

### ***OTHER PRIVATE FINANCIAL AID***

Private organizations such as corporations, labor unions, professional associations, and community and service organizations also offer aid. Scholarship programs based on a religious, ethnic, or racial heritage are available for those who qualify. When searching for such programs, consider not only the student's affiliations, but also those of the parents.

### ***FINANCIAL AID SEARCH SERVICES***

A growing number of companies have assembled computer banks containing a variety of funding sources for colleges and universities. For a fee, these search services will conduct a computer search to match a student's interests, abilities, and family income with specific colleges or organizations that offer assistance programs appropriate to the student's background and needs.

The student fills out a standardized questionnaire listing personal goals, qualifications, and background. The company returns a printout of college and organization names, addresses, and specific program information. None of the companies guarantees success in obtaining assistance.

The College Board's College Scholarship Service cautions students to check out a company's claims carefully before sending money. Ask specifically if they refund the fee if no sources are located. Further information and questionnaire forms may be obtained by writing to the following services:

***Peterson's Guides***  
Financial Aid Service  
P.O. Box 2123

Princeton, NJ 08543-2123  
Telephone: 609-243-9111

***Student College Aid***  
7950 North Stadium, Suite 229  
Houston, TX 77030  
Telephone: 713-796-2209

***National Scholarship Research Services***  
2280 Airport Boulevard  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Telephone: 707-546-6781

## **CHAPTER 16 PUTTING COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS IN PLACE**

*Communication between college student and parents is always important, but the importance is magnified when Foreign Service parents are overseas and the student is in the United States. This chapter contains some good general advice that will be helpful wherever you are, but most of it is essential reading for parents who are posted abroad during their children's college years. The distance between parents and student requires more serious attention to the details of communicating. It requires looking at ways to handle emergencies even though we hope they will never occur. Having a contingency plan in place will help everyone in the event of a crisis. Having good communication between parent and student will help everyone during this period of significant life change.*

### **FAMILY SUPPORT FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

Sending a child off to college is a difficult time for any parent, but much more so for the Foreign Service parent who drops the child at the dorm and gets on an airplane to fly half way around the world. If possible, a family member should consider remaining in the United States through Parent's Weekend. To ease the trauma, parents and students need to discuss in advance four important subjects: academic expectations, values, communication, and finances.

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

College is a time when students are growing intellectually, emotionally, and socially. An open discussion about the need to balance social development with academic achievement may help the student gain perspective on the conflicting demands on her/his time. Parents should discuss academic expectations with their student and clarify any differences they identify. Often parents say, "Just do the best you can," without explaining what that really means. It would be more helpful to discuss the student's concerns about academic achievement and clarify the consequences for not achieving his/her own expectations, the parents' expectations, or the school's expectations.

### **VALUES**

College students are faced with more choices than ever before with much less structure and fewer limits. Parents should discuss their own values and communicate these to their children. Parents with good listening skills can be a good sounding board to help the student identify her/his own values. Foreign Service students, especially when coming from a more protected overseas environment, may be overwhelmed by the social pressures they meet in college. Open communication with parents can be a source of support as the student learns to handle these pressures.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Communication between the student in the United States and the parents in a foreign post is especially important. Clear guidelines should be set for ways and frequency of communication. The traditional options of mail and telephone have been doubled with the addition of fax and e-mail for those people with computers. The unreliability and time zone frustrations of telephone calls make the expense of the computer systems worth it to Foreign Service families in difficult posts. Fax and e-mail can be particularly useful for crises.

Parents overseas should develop an alternate system for communicating with their children in the United States. The student must know where to turn if the evening news carries a story perceived as a threat to the family's safety or well-being. A family friend or relative should be identified as a surrogate parent to assist the student if the parents cannot be reached. Other sources of assistance in emergency situations could include the Family Liaison Office, the country desk officer (with permission), the school's Dean of Students, or a ham radio operator.

### ***Emergency Notification Procedure***

In case of death or serious injury to the student in the United States, the family at post can be notified through State Department channels. Cards explaining the State Department family emergency notification procedure are available from the Employee Service Center, the Family Liaison Office, or the Overseas Briefing Center. These cards should be given to the student, surrogate parents, appropriate school officials, and relatives. Non-foreign affairs agency personnel should contact their agency for their emergency notification procedure. The foreign affairs agencies are State, United States Information Agency (USIA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), Foreign Commercial Service (FCS), and Animal and Plant Health Investigative Service (APHIS). The Emergency Notification Numbers for these agencies are listed below:

Emergency Notification for ***ILLNESS OR INJURY***

DURING WORK HOURS (0815-1700 EST) for

**State, FCS, USIA:**

***Medical Unit, Foreign Programs Desk, Telephone: 202-647-8122***

DURING WORK HOURS (0845-1730 EST) for

**USAID**

***Telephone: 202-663-1400***

DURING WORK HOURS (0815-1645 EST) for

**FAS**

***Personnel Division, Telephone: 202-720-1596***

DURING WORK HOURS (0700-1630 EST) for

**APHIS**

***International Services, Resource Management Support, Telephone: 301-734-7550***

Emergency Notification for: ***ILLNESS OR INJURY AFTER WORK HOURS***  
WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS for  
**State, FCS, USAID, APHIS, and FAS:**  
***State Department Operations Center, Telephone: 202-647-1512***

**USIA**  
***USIA Operations Center, Telephone: 202-619-4792***

Emergency Notification for ***DEATH:***  
DURING WORK HOURS (0815-1700 EST): for  
**STATE, FAS, FCS, and USIA:**  
***Employee Service Center, Telephone: 202-647-3432***

DURING WORK HOURS (0845-1730 EST) for  
**USAID**  
***Telephone: 202-663-1400***

DURING WORK HOURS (0700-1630 EST) for  
**APHIS**  
***International Service, Resource Management Support, Telephone: 301-734-7550***

Emergency Notification for ***DEATH:***  
AFTER WORKING HOURS (1700 EST), WEEKENDS, AND HOLIDAYS for  
**State, USAID, APHIS, FCS, and FAS:**  
***State Department Operations Center, Telephone: 202-647-1512***

AFTER WORKING HOURS (1700 EST), WEEKENDS, AND HOLIDAYS for  
**USIA:**  
***USIA Operations Center, Telephone: 202-619-4792***

### ***Telephone Calling Cards***

AT&T offers a "Call Me" card, which allows long distance calls only to a predetermined number. Use of this card would ensure that the student could call home in an emergency but would not be able to call his/her old friends in Bujumbura or Chiang Mai. Arrangements can be made to charge these calls to a telephone number in the United States, to a Master Card or Visa account, or to a special AT&T account. For information or applications, contact the following address:

The AT&T Card Services  
P.O. Box 8209  
Fox Valley, IL 60598-8103  
Telephone: 1-800-537-0816

## **DAY-TO-DAY FINANCES**

A clear discussion of finances and financial expectations can foster a student's independence and resourcefulness, as well as forestall serious misunderstandings. If the family is overseas, the distance from "home" and the inaccessibility of parents may make the college's recommended amounts for student expenses insufficient. Parents need to set up an emergency access to funds. You could leave money with a friend or relative, establish a custodial bank account, or provide the student with a credit card or an automatic teller machine (ATM) card for emergency use. The State Department Federal Credit Union (SDFCU) will open an account in the name of any dependent of a Foreign Service member. A paycheck allotment can be deposited automatically to the student's account, thereby ensuring a regular cash supply regardless of any delay or cutoff in communication. The student member may call the SDFCU toll free and arrange for transfer of funds to a local bank.

A credit card is useful at some schools for paying deposits for telephone service and security deposits on room or laboratory equipment. It is also helpful when traveling between post and school and when cashing checks. A State Department Federal Credit Union account can give the dependent access to a Master Card if special arrangements are made. It is important to be clear about when the card can be used and the amount that can be charged.

The student should open a checking account in the town where the college is located, as out-of-town checks are often difficult to cash. It is important to open the account early enough to allow the initial deposit checks to clear or to open the account with a guaranteed bank check. Banks can hold an initial deposit check for up to 5 days, so the student may not have access to those funds during the first days of school when most expenses occur.

Choosing the most appropriate method of providing emergency funds must take into consideration the student's reliability and experience in the use of money and credit. The family may want to consider having the student open and use a checking account prior to enrollment at college. Clear parental guidelines should help prevent misunderstanding.

## **MISCELLANEOUS ARRANGEMENTS**

Students should be briefed on key elements of Department of State regulations that apply directly to them: the importance of making advance plans for overseas travel; the necessity of staying long enough at post (14 consecutive days) to qualify for U.S. Government-reimbursed travel back to school; how to obtain a Government Transportation Request (GTR) and ship airfreight; and how to get a visa and keep it up-to-date. See Ch 5, p 1 for a discussion of educational travel allowances.

Plans for holidays other than the one trip covered by Educational Travel should be discussed. The family should also discuss in advance where the student will go for short holidays or if school were to close early for some reason. The only travel covered under Educational Travel is to and from a degree-granting institution in the United States except that recent legislation allows for the travel from an overseas program of less than one year duration, e.g., a junior year abroad.

If the student does not have a driver's license, another form of identification should be obtained. Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and many other states' motor vehicle divisions provide identification cards for non-drivers. Passports are not always accepted as identification.

All students should have a card indicating their health insurance plan and entitlement. Parents should not rely on school-sponsored health insurance plans. Some clinics are closed on holidays, have limited commitments to the student during certain illnesses or accidents (specifically auto accidents), and many provide no emergency service.

The government health policy covers students until their 22nd birthday only, and plans must then be made for continuing health coverage. It is possible to continue under the family's plan for a short period (up to 18 months), but the student must assume the government's portion as well as her/his own and apply within 60 days of her/his 22nd birthday.

There will be times when the student will need advice about the normal problems that come up during the school year. This is another instance when a responsible and caring adult acting as a surrogate parent can be invaluable.

### ***Power Of Attorney***

Parents of students under the age of 18 should leave a power of attorney with an adult in the United States who could arrange for hospital admission, give permission for an operation, or otherwise act for the parent in matters involving health- or school-related questions.

### ***Global Nomads***

Global Nomads is a support network for college students and young adults: its headquarters is located at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Several colleges have Global Nomads chapters. It is a good source of information for Foreign Service college students trying to deal with the practical and emotional problems of being far away from their parents.

For more information contact:

Global Nomads International  
P. O. Box 9584  
Washington, DC 20016-9584  
Telephone: 703-993-2975  
Fax: 703-993-2966  
E-mail: nmcaig@gmuvax

### **RESOURCES**

Available from College Board. See Ch 3, p 29 for contact information.

*Inside College: New Freedom, New Responsibility*

Available from Octameron Press. See Ch 13, p 5 for contact information.

*College Freshman Survival Guide*

Check the library or bookstore for the following book.

*Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Today's College Experience* by Karen Levin  
Couburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger

## CHAPTER 17 ADULT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

*Sometimes we have the opportunity to continue our education. Perhaps a certain posting offers more after-hours leisure or perhaps a spouse who would normally work finds the job opportunities sparse. Perhaps there is just a time when we want to progress professionally or personally. There are continuing education opportunities for Foreign Service employees and family members both overseas and in Washington. In this chapter, some basic and essential information on continuing education is detailed to help those in the Foreign Service who wish to get started.*

### **WHY AND WHERE**

Education should be seen as a lifelong process, not something that is confined to the young. Some reasons to continue your education are to:

- get a Bachelor's or an advanced degree;
- complete work on an interrupted degree;
- pick up work-content skills;
- change careers;
- keep up to date in your field or to keep a professional license current;
- learn more about a subject which interests you.

There are many different ways to return to school, and within the Foreign Service lifestyle, it is often necessary to be creative in your efforts. Which way you choose depends on your individual circumstances. **Traditional degree programs** can be taken on a part-time or full-time basis at a college or university in the United States or at some overseas posts. **Individual credit courses** can be taken at many different kinds of academic institutions. **Noncredit courses** are offered through adult education divisions of community colleges, county agencies, and departments of recreation. **Correspondence courses** and **external degree programs** are offered by many colleges (see ch 5, p 19). **Continuing education credits** (CEUs) for professional credentials, which are required by many professions, can be earned at both on-campus and off-campus sites. **Training programs** can be taken at work. In addition, valuable information can be obtained by attending **conferences, workshops,** and **professional development programs** through professional associations or independent groups.

Your local public library is a good resource for adult education programs in the Washington area. Overseas, Community Liaison Offices maintain files on educational opportunities at post, as well as information on correspondence courses.

### **EVENING OR WEEKEND PROGRAMS**

Adults with family and/or work responsibilities often find that evening or weekend programs, offered by many colleges and universities, are the best way to complete a degree in the shortest possible time. These programs offer many advantages:

- Classes are held in the evening or on weekends after normal working hours allowing professional and family responsibilities to be maintained.
- The programs are designed for students who have a minimum of 60 credits from accredited colleges, and the year-round format enables most students to finish a Bachelor's degree within 18 months.
- At many schools, the core curriculum is divided into modules. Students take one course at a time with each course following consecutively. After beginning the program, there is no lag time between courses. New courses start 1 week following completion of the last course.

### **USDA GRADUATE SCHOOL**

The USDA Graduate School in Washington offers more than 1,000 courses in 50 subject areas. The school is open to all adults, and there are no admission requirements. The school does not grant degrees but does grant Certificates of Accomplishment. Some of the courses offered have been designated as receiving college credit recommendations by the American Council on Education's Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction (ACE/PONSI).

The Graduate School offers evening and weekend courses, day courses, and correspondence courses. Evening and weekend courses include accounting, career development, foreign languages, science, paralegal studies, agriculture, computers, business, management, test preparation, and many others. Telephone: 202-720-5885 for more information.

Day programs include the following:

- Government Adult Training  
Telephone: 202-401-9401
- Center for Applied Management  
Computer Sciences  
Procurement and Property Management  
Communications Skills  
Telephone: 202-401-9119

Correspondence Courses are available in law and paralegal studies, elder law, English skills, accounting, electronics, hydraulics, auditing, management, computer sciences, editing, math, personnel administration, writing, and more. Community Liaison Offices receive periodic mailings of USDA course offerings. Information and course catalogs are available from:

USDA Graduate School Correspondence Program  
Room 1112, South Agriculture Building  
14th Street & Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
Telephone: 202-720-7123

## **OTHER PROGRAMS**

*College credits for life experiences* are given by many colleges. They provide the opportunity to earn up to 30 college credits for life and work experience. Foreign Service family members can use their international experience to advantage in this type of program. Several colleges in the Washington area offer these programs.

*The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)* is designed to allow students to get college credit for knowledge learned outside the classroom. CLEP is the nation's most widely accepted credit-by-examination program. Nearly two-thirds of higher education, accredited institutions award credit for satisfactory scores on CLEP examinations. See Chapter 3, page 24 in this book for further details.

## **HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS**

### ***GED Program***

The General Educational Development (GED) testing program provides certification of a high school diploma equivalent for people who did not complete requirements for high school graduation. The GED has also been used satisfactorily by foreign-born spouses to obtain an English equivalent to a foreign degree. Details on GED tests and their overseas administration is found on page 33 in Chapter 6 of this book.

## **EXTERNAL DIPLOMAS FOR ADULTS**

Another way for those without a high school diploma to obtain credentials is through an external diploma program offered by many U.S. school systems. For example, Fairfax County, Virginia, offers a self-paced, appointment-information session program (no classes) that allows an adult to demonstrate 64 general competencies, including skill in reading, writing, and mathematics through testing. Completion time varies from 4 months to a year. Upon completion, a high school diploma is awarded by the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Other school systems offer adult high school completion courses that feature daytime and evening small-class instructional programs for adults, 17 and older, who have previously attended but not graduated from high school. For more information about these programs, contact the appropriate school system.

## **ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD**

Many colleges and universities abroad can be attended by Foreign Service family members. There may be a U.S. college or university at post, a local college or university that an employee or adult family member can attend, or graduate/undergraduate programs given at the local American or international school. Check for information on local options at the Community Liaison Office at post.

Many American colleges have programs at posts with U.S. military bases nearby. These programs range from certificate or associate degree in recreation technology and occupational education to graduate programs in international relations, counseling, public

administration, and systems management. Some countries have a national university that foreigners may attend provided the applicant is fluent in the language of instruction. There are also posts that have universities with classes in English.

Many American and international schools give courses for the teachers at their schools, and these classes are often open to members of the U.S. Mission. For example, at the American School in Bombay, California State College gives graduate and credential programs in education, and graduate courses in education are given three times a year in Hong Kong and Cyprus by Michigan State University.

### ***GRADUATE LEVEL PROGRAMS***

Even if you are stationed abroad, it is possible to work toward a graduate degree. You can take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) at 141 overseas locations. For information about taking the GRE, contact the Educational Testing Service at the following address:

Graduate Record Examination  
Educational Testing Service  
P.O. Box 6000  
Princeton, NJ 08541-6000  
Telephone: 609-771-7670  
Fax: 609-771-7906

Testing in certain Middle Eastern and Asian nations can be arranged only through the official GRE agent designated for that country. The names of those countries and the correct addresses for the agents can be found in the *GRE Registration and Information Bulletin*, published by the Educational Testing Service. A copy of that bulletin is sent to Community Liaison Offices each fall.

If you plan to apply to graduate school from overseas, make sure you have developed a list of people who will write letters of recommendation for your applications. At least one academic reference is desirable. Writing samples and resumes of work experiences can be useful adjuncts to the application. Most graduate schools require a stay on campus, so it is helpful to choose a school in a location where you are likely to live in the United States, or where you have studied previously.

After selecting graduate schools with attractive programs in your field of interest, write jointly to the Admissions Office and to the Chairman of the Department in your chosen field. Ask the Department Chairman for information on residency requirements (minimum number of course units that must be taken on campus) and the basic degree requirements. Explain your situation to the Department Chairman and request approval to take some course(s) locally, if they are available.

### ***CORRESPONDENCE COURSES OFFERED BY AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES***

Correspondence study is individual instruction by mail. It is flexible, convenient, and personalized. Students can enroll at any time, study at home, and set their own pace. Work is done on a one-to-one basis with faculty experts who design the instructional materials, guide course study, and prepare specific responses to the submitted work.

Correspondence study is demanding. Since the printed word and written exchanges are the principal learning media, it is essential that students have reasonably strong reading and writing skills. While the flexibility of correspondence study is one of its distinct advantages, it is also one of its greatest hazards. Being on their own, unsupported by the discipline of the traditional classroom, correspondence students must have the initiative and self-reliance to develop good study habits, work independently, and establish and maintain a regular schedule of study.

Those interested in correspondence study should obtain a copy of Peterson's *Independent Study Catalog*. It provides information for students in the United States and abroad on colleges and universities that provide correspondence instruction and the courses offered by those institutions. Prospective students can obtain further information, catalogs, and registration forms from the individual institution in which they are interested.

Students who wish to apply credit earned through correspondence study to a college degree or a high school diploma should consult the resident institution before enrolling in a correspondence study course. Most institutions have limitations on the number and kinds of correspondence study credits they will accept. Credit earned in correspondence study courses taken from a regionally accredited institution is normally transferable to another institution; however, since policies and degree requirements vary among universities and colleges, students are urged to consult appropriate officials at the institution from which they expect to receive a degree to find out whether credit is transferable. If course work is taken from an institution that is not regionally accredited, transferring the course work may be more difficult.

The cost of taking a correspondence course varies from course to course and from college to college. Each institution sets its own pricing structure, based upon the expenses associated with each course and the institution's overall fee policies. In all cases, students must pay the postage on items that they mail. An institution's catalog will identify policies and cost for foreign enrollments.

## **RESOURCES**

Available from

Oryx Press  
4041 North Central  
Phoenix, AZ 85012  
Telephone: 800-279-6799  
*Guide to External Degree Programs in the United States*

Available from Thorson Guides

Box 470886  
Tulsa, OK 74147  
Telephone: 918-622-2811  
*Campus-Free College Degrees*

Available from Peterson's Guides. See Ch 5, p 18 for contact information.

*The Electronic University*  
See Ch 14, p 9 for description.  
*Independent Study Catalog*

## **ADULT EDUCATION IN WASHINGTON**

For Foreign Service employees and family members assigned to Washington, there are a variety of adult education programs available in the Metropolitan area. For those who are undecided about their academic goals or unsure how to proceed, it is important to do a self-assessment to help you know exactly what you want to accomplish. If you haven't given much thought to what you would like to be doing several years from now, it is helpful to take the time to do it before committing time and money to any course of study.

A visit to a college or university with a continuing education program is a logical place to start. Interest tests, self-analysis programs, counseling, and even life management courses are part of a strong continuing education program. Many institutions in the Washington area offer such programs. The Family Liaison Office maintains a file of local education opportunities. The resources listed below can be helpful to those interested in continuing education.

### **RESOURCES**

Most area public school systems offer adult education programs.

Call the school for more information:

District of Columbia            202-576-6308

#### *In Virginia*

Alexandria City                703-824-6845

Arlington County            703-276-6990

Fairfax County                703-506-2233

Prince William County        703-791-7356

#### *In Maryland*

Anne Arundel County 410-222-5383

Montgomery County        301-929-2025

Prince George's County      301-805-2710

The following schools offer adult and continuing education programs:

#### ***District of Columbia***

American University

4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20016

Telephone: 202-885-1000

Catholic University

321 Pangborn Hall

Washington, DC 20064

Telephone: 202-319-5256

Corcoran School of Art

500 - 17th Street NW

Washington, DC 20006

Telephone: 202-628-9484

George Washington University

2029 K Street NW

Suite 600

Washington, DC 20006

Telephone: 202-973-1175

Georgetown University  
37th and O Streets NW  
ICC, Room 306  
Washington, DC 20057  
Telephone: 202-687-5942

Howard University  
1100 Wayne Avenue  
Suite 600  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Telephone: 301-585-2295

Mount Vernon College  
2100 Foxhall Road NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Telephone: 202-625-4500  
fax: 202-625-4688

Southeastern University  
502 I Street SW  
Washington, DC 20024  
Telephone: 202-265-5343

Strayer College  
6830 Laurel Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone: 202-722-8100

Trinity College  
125 Michigan Avenue NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
Telephone: 202-939-5000

University of the District of Columbia  
Building 51  
1100 Harvard Street NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
Telephone: 202-274-6675

University of Southern California  
Washington Extension  
512 - 10th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Telephone: 202-638-4949

***Maryland***

Anne Arundel Community College  
101 College Parkway  
Arnold, MD 21012  
Telephone: 301-541-2325

Capitol College  
11301 Springfield Road  
Laurel, MD 20708  
Telephone: 410-792-8800

Columbia Union College  
7600 Flower Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
Telephone: 301-891-4143

Montgomery College  
51 Mannakee Street  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Telephone: 301-279-5188

Prince George's Community College  
301 Largo Road  
Largo, MD 20772  
Telephone: 301-322-0875

University of Maryland College Park  
University College  
University Boulevard and Adelphi Road  
College Park MD 20742  
Telephone: 301-985-7000

## ***Virginia***

George Mason University Extended Studies  
4400 University Drive  
Mailstop 3A4  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Telephone: 703-993-2100

Marymount University Continuing Education  
2807 North Glebe Road  
Arlington, VA 22207-4299  
Telephone: 703-522-5600

Northern Virginia Community College  
8333 Little River Turnpike  
Annandale, VA 22003  
Telephone: 703-323-3168

University of Virginia Continuing Education  
2990 Telestar Court  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Telephone: 703-876-6900

Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
2990 Telestar Court  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
Telephone: 703-698-6016

Washington Business School  
1980 Gallows Road  
Vienna, VA 22182  
Telephone: 703-556-8888

## ***NON-DEGREE PROGRAMS***

Those who are interested in taking courses and enriching their lives without specific educational goals will find a smorgasbord of tempting classes available. Costs are generally low and classes easily accessible in neighborhood schools, recreation centers, churches, and meeting halls. It is important to note that no matter how promising a course title, you should look carefully into the exact content to avoid disappointment. Shopping around for prices is important too, as sometimes individuals who teach high-price university courses also work for public schools, offering similar information at much lower costs.

For current class schedules and course descriptions, you can contact local community colleges, universities, county education and recreation departments, and the YWCA. The

same information is usually available at the local public libraries in the public interest section. In addition, the following institutions offer an eclectic variety of courses worth looking into:

Creative Education Program (CEP)

Glen Echo Park

7300 MacArthur Boulevard

Glen Echo, MD 20768

Telephone: 301-492-6229

Resident Associate Program

Smithsonian Institution

1100 Jefferson Davis Drive SW

Washington, DC 20075

Telephone: 202-357-3030

First Class

1726 - 20th Street NW

Washington, DC 20009

Telephone: 202-797-5102

## ***FINANCIAL AID***

While many traditional forms of financial aid are increasingly difficult to find, opportunities are still available. The first step is deciding what degree you wish to earn and which university you hope to attend. The financial aid office at each university should be your first stopping place. Individuals working at the graduate level will find a wealth of information by contacting professors in their major fields. In addition, the following organizations can provide current information:

American Association of University Women

Director, AAUW Fellowship Program

1111 - 16th Street NW

Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: 202-785-7700

Association of American Foreign Service Women

Adult Educational Loan Chair

5125 MacArthur Boulevard NW, Suite 36

Washington, DC 20016

Telephone: 202-362-6514

Fax: 202-362-6589

Business and Professional Women's Foundation

2012 Massachusetts Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202-293-1100

Danforth Foundation  
Director, Graduate Fellowships for Women  
Suite 180  
231 South Bemiston Avenue  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
Telephone: 314-862-6200

National Science Foundation  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 20550  
Telephone: 202-306-1670

## **RESOURCES**

Available from Educational Testing Service. See Ch 12, p 2 for contact information.  
*How to Get College Credit for What You Have Learned As a Homemaker and Volunteer*

Available from Octameron Press. See Ch 13, p 5 for contact information.  
*Don't Miss Out: The Ambitious Student's Guide to Scholarships and Loans*