

Third Culture Kids Adoption Program Guidelines

One of the continuing ministries of Alliance Women Ministries through the Districts of the Christian and Missionary Alliance is the "adoption" of our Third Culture Kids (TCK). The word "adopt" can be defined, "to take by choice into a relationship; to take voluntarily as one's own child". That is what we purpose to do through TCK Adoption. It is our privilege to partner with our International Workers by expressing love and care for their children.

Each District is unique in how its' churches participate in this program, but to keep some uniformity, the following guidelines are offered from the National Alliance Women Ministries Executive Team.

1. Every District AWM Leadership Team should have a member who is responsible for the TCK Adoption Program in that District.
2. The District TCK Adoption Program coordinator will send the "Ideas, Suggestions and Guidelines" packet to all participating churches. It is the responsibility of this person to communicate on a regular basis with the TCK families and the adoptive churches. Sending Certificates of Adoption to participating churches is an idea used in some Districts.
3. An updated list of the District's adopted TCKs (including name, age, parents and country) with the assigned churches should be given to the District Director and the National TCK Adoption Program coordinator annually or sooner if there are changes of great importance. Any unassigned children should be included with the list. It is suggested that this list also be sent to the District Superintendent and the Missions Mobilization director.
4. The AWM District Director should regularly communicate with the District Office for updated information about international worker appointees so that ministry to these families may be started early in the process.
5. It is suggested that the District AWM Leadership Team use events such as retreats and District Conference to promote the TCK Adoption Program.
6. When parents no longer work overseas or after two years of leave-of-absence assignment, children are no longer eligible for the adoption program. Please notify the assigned church about the change.
7. TCKs are eligible to remain in the adoption program until the age of 21 or marriage.
8. Because AWM sponsors this program all opportunities taken to minister to an adopted TCK should be reported annually to the District AWM Director by all participating churches. This information will be included with the annual report sent to the National AWM Director.

Alliance Women Ministries
Third Culture Kids Adoption Program

Date:

Church:

Thank you for your interest in adopting a **Third Culture Kid**! I am happy to inform you that your **TCK** has arrived!

Name:

Parents:

Country of Service:

Birthdate:

Mailing Address:

E-mail Address:

How to begin this new relationship and responsibility:

1. **Read** all the enclosed information. *If you have any questions, contact me.* Begin a file to include all of this information and a record of contact with your TCK.
2. **Begin immediately to PRAY** for your adopted TCK. Share this new responsibility with your church family through your local Alliance Women Ministries.
3. **Write** a letter or e-mail to your TCK and your TCK's parents introducing yourselves. Include pictures of your church and/or AWM and the "TCK Mailing and Gift Information Questionnaire". Do not send any packages or money until you receive their response. *Notify me if you do not receive the requested information.*
4. Once you hear from your TCK's family and receive their mailing suggestions, **start planning** for the gifts/packages you will send. Follow the International Worker's mailing instructions as closely as possible. Enclose a copy of the "Quick Response Form" in each package sent. Remember to send the "Annual TCK Update" to your TCK and parents each year.
5. **Keep praying and writing** *even if* your TCK is not the best at responding!

(Give contact information for the District TCK Adoption Program Coordinator)

TCK Adoption Program: Local Church Responsibilities

1. **APPOINT** a local TCK Adoption Program Coordinator or team. This person or team may be from different ministry groups in the church—AWM, children’s ministry, youth ministry, missions committee.
2. **PRAY** (see Praying for Your TCK) Share this important ministry with the entire church family. Keep informed.
3. **COMMUNICATE** with your TCK and your TCK’s family. Frequent letters, cards and e-mails will let him/her know he/she is important. Ask to receive their family newsletter. Keep up with any change of address. Families may move or return to the States unexpectedly and kids may go away to boarding school.
4. **SEND GIFTS** (see Gift Giving) Plan ahead and mail early. Mark your calendar 3-4 months in advance for promoting the gift giving occasion, receiving donations and mailing.
5. **INVITE your TCK and family** to your church when they are on Home Assignment. Be creative and have an “UnBirthday” Party or “Christmas in July” celebration or a similar event to celebrate your TCK! If there are other children in the family attending remember gifts for them as well. Give an open invitation to the church and spread the blessing of the occasion!
6. **KEEP COMPLETE RECORDS** of all TCK information, activities, gifts and expenses. Be sure this information is kept up-to-date and is included in an annual report through AWM. These records will be passed along to any new TCK coordinator when appointed. (see Information to Organize and Maintain)
7. **PROMOTE the TCK Adoption Program** in your church with permission from the pastor/governing board. Church family involvement is important. Suggested promotions: AWM events, announcements of special occasions, bulletin inserts, bulletin board, prayer meetings, donation opportunities for gifts, college scholarship funds, arranged phone call/skype during a church service, church newsletters, etc.
8. **BE FAITHFUL and continue the adoption as long as possible.** (see Adoption Guidelines for TCK eligibility) If at some point circumstances change and you are no longer able to fulfill your TCK adoption responsibilities, PLEASE contact the District TCK Adoption Coordinator immediately. Our goal is have your TCK quickly reassigned and not be neglected. Often there are churches on a waiting list for adoption. As a courtesy notify the TCK’s parents of the need for change. If a scrapbook of correspondence and pictures has been kept offer it as a gift to the family.

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

-sentiments of a TCK’s mother