

# Expatriate Children

International Children Checklist

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paper

# III

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# The RES Forum

## International Children Checklist

When managing international assignments of people with children, it is not only the parents who shape the message that will be sent to the future, but also the organization.

Although perhaps not having a direct say, children of all ages observe everything going on around them. If the whole assignment experience is poorly managed, there is a high risk that their experience (and message) of being abroad and internationally mobile is a negative one. Rather than seeing all the great opportunities and benefits connected with living away from their home country for a few years, they will see the downsides and struggles and, consequently, carry this message forward into their own futures, as well as for subsequent generations. And this completely ignores the fact that a bad family experience will, thanks to spill-over effects between the private and work domain, negatively affect the assignees' performance as well.

We, therefore, conclude our report with a “message checklist”.





The **RES Forum International Children Checklist** helps you evaluate the needs of international assignees' children and understand how well your organization accommodates these needs.

Answer the following questions, then follow the next step accordingly:

1. My organization explicitly accounts for children in our global mobility policy. **YES / NO**
2. My organization explicitly differentiates between age of children (e.g., in years, or in groups such as babies / infants; toddlers; primary school children; etc.) in our global mobility policy. **YES / NO**
3. Each assignment where children are involved is handled by a trained / certified expert who specializes in family assignments. **YES / NO**

If you answered "YES" for at least two questions, proceed with [Path A](#).

If you answered "NO" for at least two questions, proceed with [Path B](#).

# Path A

Congratulations, your organization is one of the few that has a great base to work from.

In the following, we provide a few calibration questions. Please respond as openly and honestly as possible. They are intended to be reflective and there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Just write down your thoughts, either as bullet points or text.

When you are done, use your notes as the basis for a discussion with your colleagues in the GM and HR functions. Invite them to think about what you still can improve and how to place this important topic on the corporate agenda. You may also want to use this list as a starting point with any external support, such as consultancies.

**A1:** When did you last revise your policies relating to support for assignees’ children? What changes were made and for what reason? Does your organization make sure the policy(s) are successful and, if so, against which KPIs?

**A2:** Do you regularly include (former) assignees in the process of designing support for assignees’ children? If so, how often and how is this managed? If not, why not and how would doing so be a potential improvement?

**A3:** Based on the best practices and examples provided in this report, how do your policies and practices compare? What do you do well? What are you not doing yet? And what could you implement to become even better?

**A4:** Who are the best people in your organization to support you in making any changes or improvements? Write down a few colleagues’ names, including their role and their influence within the organization (i.e., are they key decision makers, can they influence change at a senior level, etc.). Consider what you need to do to convince them to join your efforts. Commit to approaching at least two of them in the next week and get the conversation started.

# Path B

Ok, your organization is not as advanced as it could be, but even the longest journey starts with a single step, so let's go! Keep in mind: you are not alone. In fact, based on our initial scoping, most organizations will be in a similar position to you.

In the following, we provide you with a few calibration questions. Please respond as openly and honestly as possible. They are intended to be reflective in nature and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Just write down your thoughts, either as bullets or text.

When you are done, use your notes as the basis for a discussion with your colleagues in the GM and HR functions. Invite them to think about what you can improve and how to place this important topic on the corporate agenda. You may also want to use this list as a starting point with any external support, such as consultancies.

**B1:** When was the last time you were actively confronted with an international assignee going abroad with children? How, if at all, did you account for the family situation?

**B2:** Looking back, is there anything you could have done differently / better, based on the best practices in this report? How would this have benefitted the assignee and their family?

**B3:** If you wanted to make the support of international assignees' children a bigger priority, what are the biggest roadblocks you expect to face? How can these roadblocks be removed?

**B4:** Who are the best people in your organization to support you in making any changes or improvements? Write down a few colleagues' names including their role and their influence within the organization (i.e., are they key decision makers, can they influence change at a senior level, etc.) Consider what you need to do to convince them to join your efforts. Commit to approaching at least two of them in the next week and get the conversation started.