



Learning Abroad Center

Learning Abroad for Student Parents

Student Parents are Welcome in the Learning Abroad Center!

The Learning Abroad Center and the Student Parent Help Center are working in conjunction to provide student parents the opportunity to have an experience abroad.

While an international experience is a very viable option, there are some things to consider when planning to take your child or family with you:

- The age of your child may affect resources available on-site as well as the child's participation in program activities.
- Extra costs will be incurred by you for family members, which may include international health insurance, visas, immunizations, housing, child care, and flights. Amounts vary depending on location. These costs are not covered by financial aid.
- You are likely to have extra responsibilities such as obtaining international health insurance, visa, housing, and other necessities that may be provided to you by the program but not to your child or family.
- In each instance, the student's particular case will need to be reviewed for final approval with the appropriate program sponsor.

A Few Scenarios

There are many ways to plan your experience abroad. Here are two scenarios for bringing a child that have worked for other students:

- One student arrived at the program without his daughter. While he was getting oriented and finding housing and child care, his parents were taking care of his three year old in the US. About one month into the program his parents arrived to visit and bring his daughter to him who then stayed with him for the rest of the semester.
- Another student brought her husband and daughter on a short term program. They were able to stay in the program's housing. She went to class while he took care of their daughter.

Being a Program Participant & Parent

While studying abroad, students often form close bonds with fellow participants as well as host country nationals. Many student parents have experienced these rich connections. At the same time some student parents have found that responsibilities to their family have taken precedence over connecting with fellow participants and host country nationals.

Many study abroad programs have overnight excursions included in the program. It may not be feasible to bring your child or family on these excursions.

Cultural Attitudes

Depending on the cultural context, as well as your own personal context, there will be a variety of responses to you traveling with a family or child. Being a single parent will be perceived differently in other cultural contexts and vary if you are a man or woman. This is something for you to reflect on, and perhaps seek input about, before your experience abroad.

Additional Financial & Logistical Considerations

Housing

The best case scenario would be that the program provider would be able to provide you with housing. If their regular housing is not a possibility (it may be in dorms or another location that cannot accommodate children), then it is possible that the program provider would be able to help you find appropriate housing. Alternatively, you may have to find housing on your own before your program begins (it is possible there is no on-site support to assist you or the on-site resources are not able to locate other housing).

Flights

You will need to purchase tickets for your child or family. Your family may not be able to participate in the group flight.

Passports, Visas, & Immunizations

Each family member will need a passport and a visa for entry into the country. Depending on the country, immunizations may also be needed. Program providers usually assist in obtaining a student visa for the program participant. Depending on the length of stay and country where you will be visiting, the visa for your family may be easy or hard and expensive or inexpensive to obtain. You will need to acquire these visas on your own. Also, some countries have other requirements for entry when minors are involved and not traveling with both parents. Be sure to thoroughly check on requirements.

Schooling & Child Care

You will need to provide schooling or child care for your child while in classes if you do not have another person with you on the program. This will incur extra costs. Also, the level to which the program provider can assist in finding child care or entering your child into school will vary depending on location. The best case scenario is that they have child care services nearby or are affiliated with a school for your child to attend. Alternatively, you may need to locate the services or school on your own. You may be eligible for Child Care Assistance Grants through the University of Minnesota Student Parent Help Center. Call 612.626.6015 or email sphc@umn.edu.

Funding Sources for Student Parents

- The Student Parent Help Center provides funding for child care for student parents on study abroad programs—up to \$1300 per child per semester at 15 credit hours. To be eligible, you must be seeking your first bachelor's degree, an enrolled student, and Minnesota State Grant eligible.
- The Student Parent Help Center also provides academic scholarships for \$750–\$1000.
- Inquire with your department or college for scholarships.
- The Learning Abroad Center offers scholarships and has many resources to research scholarships.

Next Steps

1. Attend a First Step Meeting at the Learning Abroad Center.
2. Register at the Student Parent Help Center.
3. Research international program options.
4. Speak with a Learning Abroad Center adviser—let them know you are planning on bringing your child or family.
5. Choose a program and apply.
6. Proceed with academic planning with your adviser.

More Information

For further information, contact the Learning Abroad Center or the Student Parent Help Center:

Student Parent Help Center

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Learning Abroad Center

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