

# RAISING GLOBALLY-MINDED CHILDREN IN YOUR OWN HOME

13 SIMPLE WAYS TO EXPLORE THE WORLD FROM YOUR COUCH



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# Why does global-mindedness matter?

Our children will inherit a far more diverse and interconnected world than the one we live in today. Globalization is rapidly deepening international connections, not just in economics and business, but also in technology, politics, fashion, science, security, disaster relief, entertainment, and beyond. Without the proper preparation, our children risk falling behind, failing to find a place in this international network.

Despite the increasing need for cross-cultural competencies, the United States is infamously failing to raise a new generation of global citizens. Monolingualism, for example, is endemic. While 66% of the world's children are raised bilingual, only 6.3% of children in the United States are learning a second language.<sup>1</sup> Exacerbating this problem is the age at which language instruction typically begins. 75% of school districts in the United States wait to start language instruction until middle or high school.<sup>2</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, more than 56% of Europeans are bilingual, 200 million Chinese schoolchildren are learning English, and South Korean parents rallied to convince schools to begin language education in the first grade, rather than the second.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/parents/theparentshow/blog/surprising-advantages-of-bilingual-education/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.newsweek.com/american-kids-immersed-chinese-asian-education-68477>

Languages are only the tip of the globally-minded iceberg. Fewer than 2% of America's 18 million university students elect to study abroad, while more than 700,000 international students flock to American institutions each year.

These widespread systemic short-comings force many parents to assume responsibility for their children's international education. But this effort does not have to be a burden, financially or emotionally. You can immerse your children in new cultures, expose them to new languages, and encourage them to interact with diverse peoples right from your own home, and you can have fun doing it!

In this eBook, we'll explore 13 ways you can raise a globally-minded child without leaving your own community.

## CHAPTER ONE

# EXPLORE YOUR OWN HERITAGE

# Make culture personal.

A curiosity about other cultures is best rooted in a strong knowledge of one's own cultural background. Before exposing your children to the many different cultures around the world, take some time to explore your own heritage. Learning about the origins of your family's traditions and beliefs will make it easier to understand and value those of other peoples.

- **Dig up old pictures:** Create a photo book with old family pictures, if you have them available. This will provide a visual narrative to the story of your family.



- **Build your family tree:** Trace your family lineage back as far as possible, exploring the different countries in which your family members have lived. Pull out a map or globe so your children can visualize their journeys.
- **Interview a family member:** If you have a living relative who immigrated from your country of origin, have your children interview that person about their experiences living overseas. Record the exchange so your kids can look back at it over the years.
- **Pass down family traditions:** When baking your grandmother's famous challah bread with a super secret ingredient, or lighting your father's old menorah during Chanukah, explain how these traditions have been passed down from earlier generations, and discuss how they play a role in your culture.





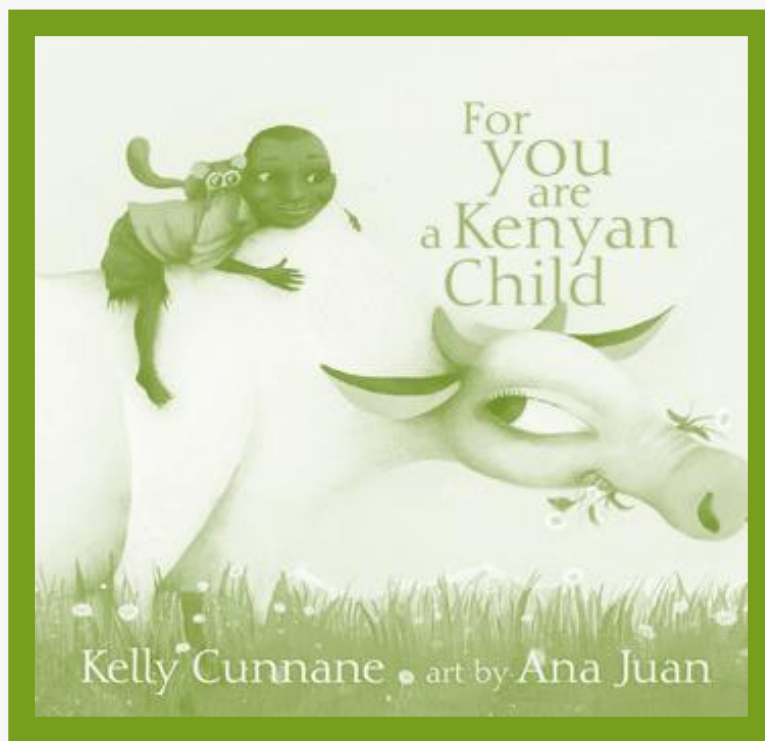
## CHAPTER TWO

# READ BOOKS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



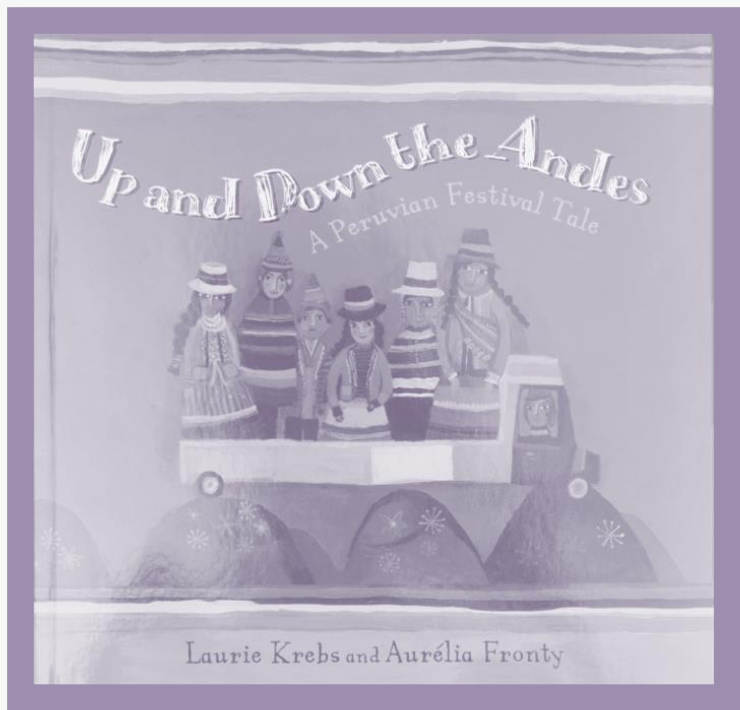
# Turn the page to another world.

Make story time a multi-cultural experience by choosing books from around the world. Only speak English? We'll address *that* issue later on, but don't fret—there's plenty of selection. Search for stories that feature diverse and unfamiliar settings and characters to give your children a glance into another world. Here's a few of our favorites:



## **“For You are a Kenyan Child” by Kelly Cunnane**

Your children will discover what it means to grow up in a small Kenyan village, where you wake to the crowing of a rooster rather than the buzzing of an alarm clock. Great for ages 3+.

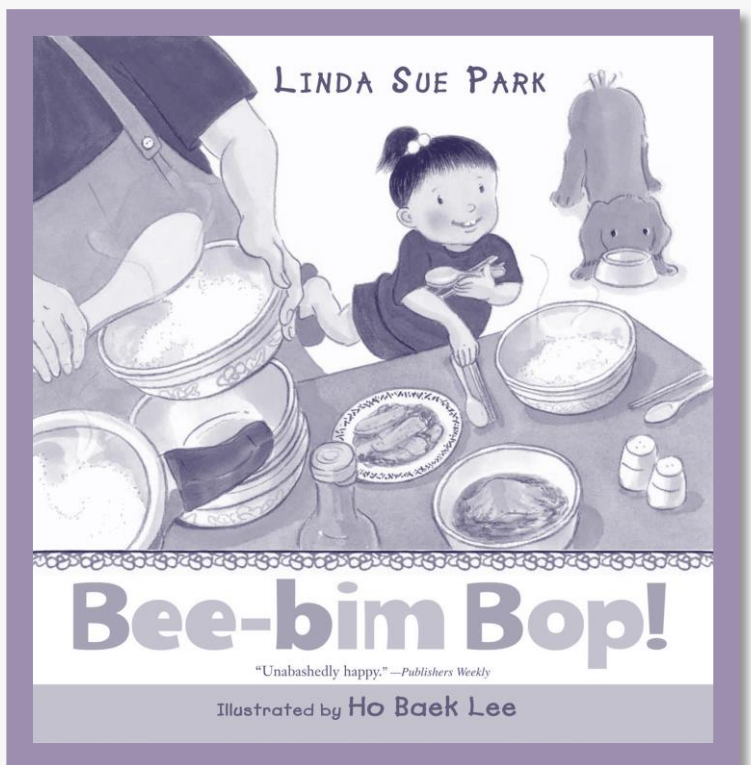


**“Up and Down the Andes” by Laurie Krebs and Aurelia Fronty**

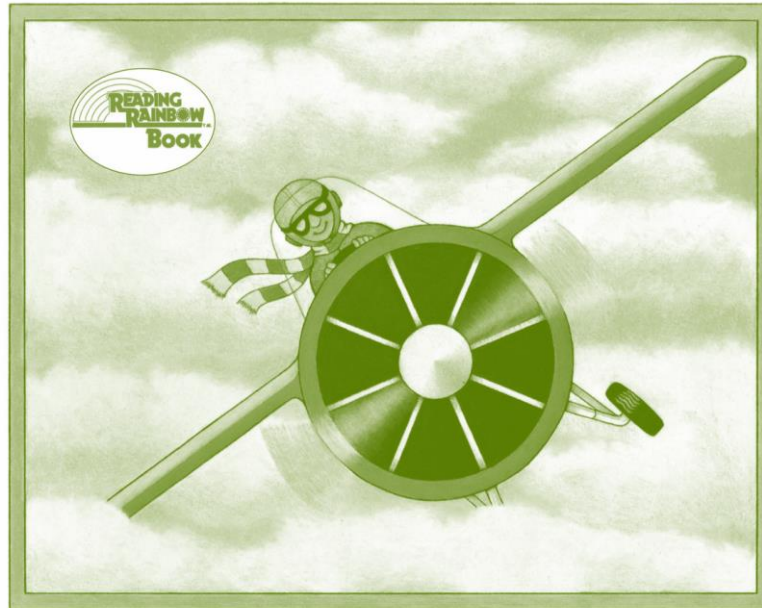
Your children will be taken on an adventure from Lake Titicaca to Cusco, meeting numerous Peruvian children along the way who share their daily experiences. Perfect for ages 3+.

**“Bee-Bim Bop!” by Linda Sue Park**

This picture-heavy, rhyming text tells the story of a young Korean girl helping her mother prepare bee-bim bop (mix-mix rice). It even includes a recipe so you can make your own afterwards! Good for ages 3+.



# Amelia's Fantastic Flight



## **“Amelia’s Fantastic Flight” by Rose Bursik**

Amelia will fly your children to six continents, visiting fourteen different countries. The book includes two full-spread maps, in addition to many smaller maps, so you can follow along with her journey. Ideal for ages 4+.

There are plenty of options out there, including the wonderful selection in this [extensive list](#). You can pick a specific country or continent to focus on, or explore the world at large on the pages of diverse children’s stories. Be sure to discuss the stories afterwards: What surprised your children? How did the characters’ lives compare to their own? Make it a learning experience by reflecting on the cultural differences.

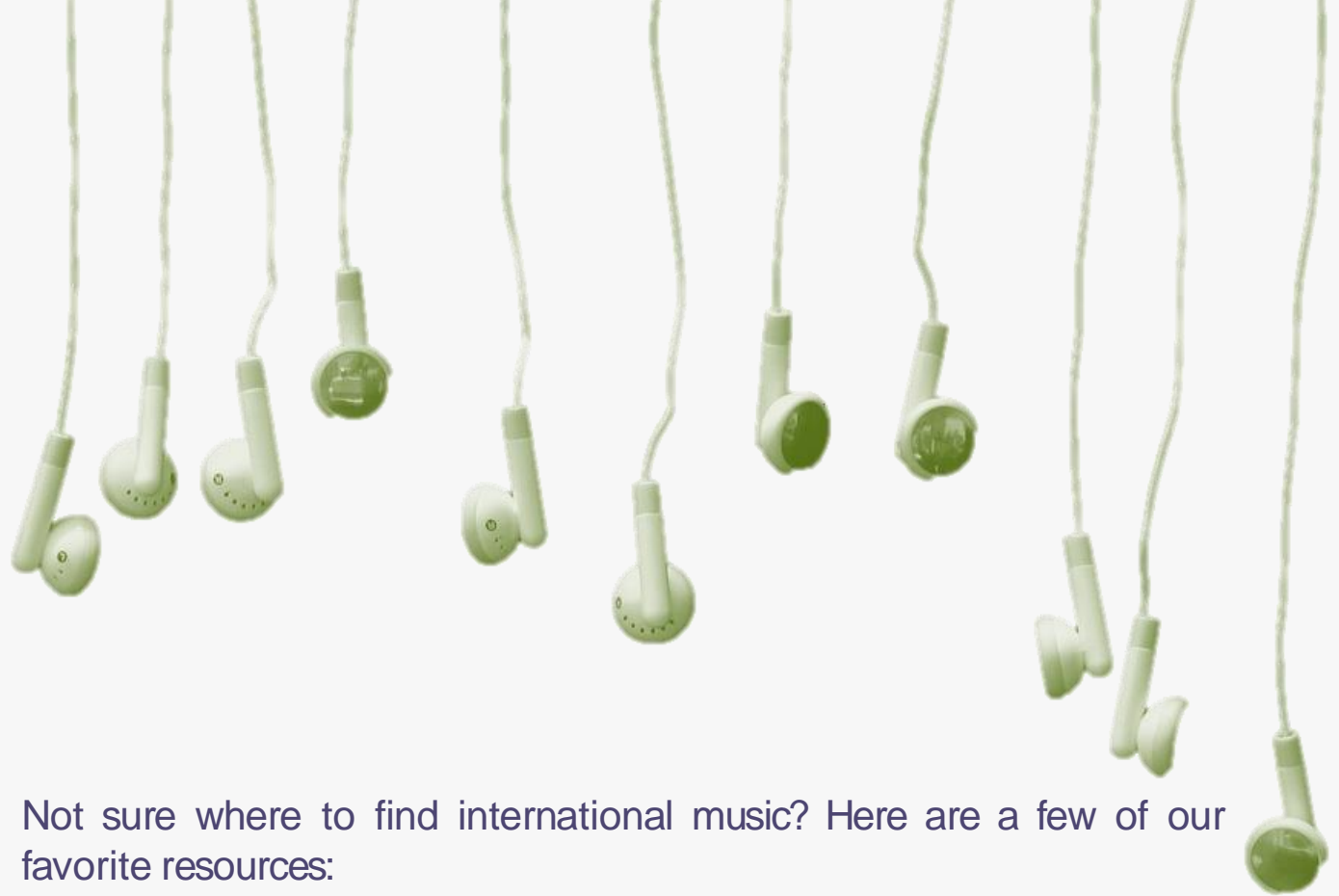
## CHAPTER THREE

# PLAY INTERNATIONAL MUSIC

# Get into a global rhythm.

Sometimes it's best to let the music do the talking, or perhaps the singing. Sprinkle some international music into your playlists around the house during mealtime or before bed. Turn on an international radio channel in the car while shuffling your kids to soccer practice or play dates. Even if they don't understand the lyrics, hearing another language and style of music is an opportunity to experience something new. Music is universal—your children just might find a style and rhythm they love, opening the door to further exploration of that culture.





Not sure where to find international music? Here are a few of our favorite resources:

- **Pandora:** You've probably used this free radio service before, but did you know they have an extensive selection of [World music](#)? Stations range from Brazilian Music to Bollywood Hits to Afrobeat. Sign up for a free account, pick a station, and see where it takes you!
- **Last.fm:** The [Charts section of Last.fm](#) allows you to search for popular tracks by city or country. When you select a song, you can stream it free from Spotify, look through similar tracks, or buy the track so you can listen to it on the go.
- **Grooveshark:** This free streaming site groups music by [genres](#), offering international stations including K-Pop, Bachata, Samba, and the more generic World station.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# EAT FOREIGN FOODS



# Get a taste of something new.

Engage your children's senses with a weekly foreign food night. Each week, choose a new country or region's cuisine (perhaps in sync with a book you're reading from a specific country) and search for a recipe. If you're not much of a chef, you could also choose to go out to dinner at a local ethnic restaurant.

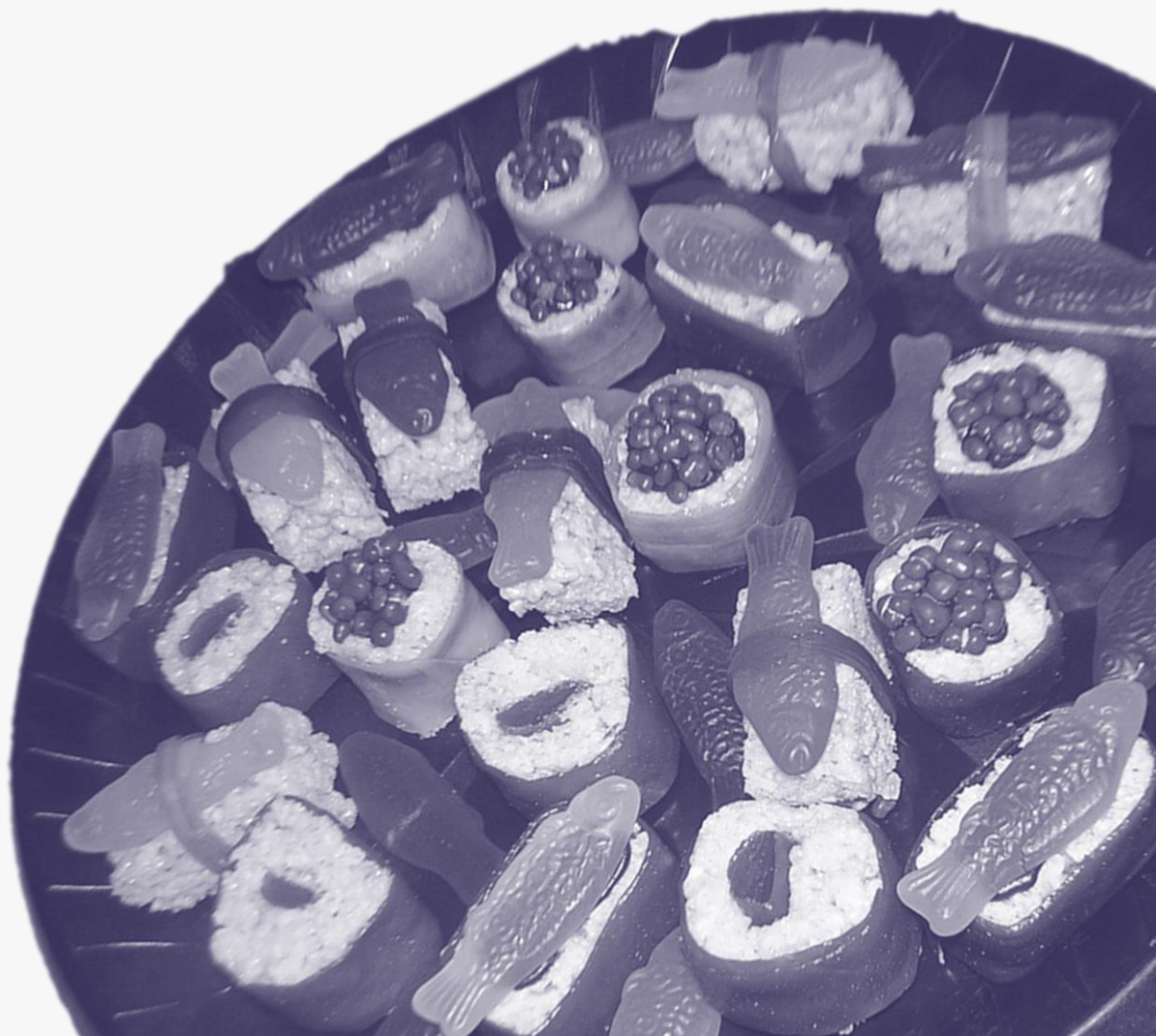




If you're staying in to cook your own multi-cultural meal, here are a few ways you can spice it up:

- **Decorate the table accordingly:** String up paper lanterns or dine on pillows on the floor, if the situation calls for it.
- **Eat the traditional way:** Whether it be with chopsticks, or even bare hands, make the experience fun and authentic by eating the way natives would.
- **Discuss the culture at hand:** Come to the table equipped with some topics of discussion about the culture whose cuisine you're exploring.

- **Please picky eaters:** Get creative! You can tailor any ethnic food to meet your children's dietary needs while still imparting the culture. For example, if your child balks at the thought of raw fish, try making candy sushi with marshmallows and gummy candies while learning about Japan.
- **Make it hands on:** Depending on their ages, let your kids get involved in the actual cooking process as well. Exploring different ingredients and cooking methods from around the world will make the experience even more memorable.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# HOST A FOREIGN FILM NIGHT



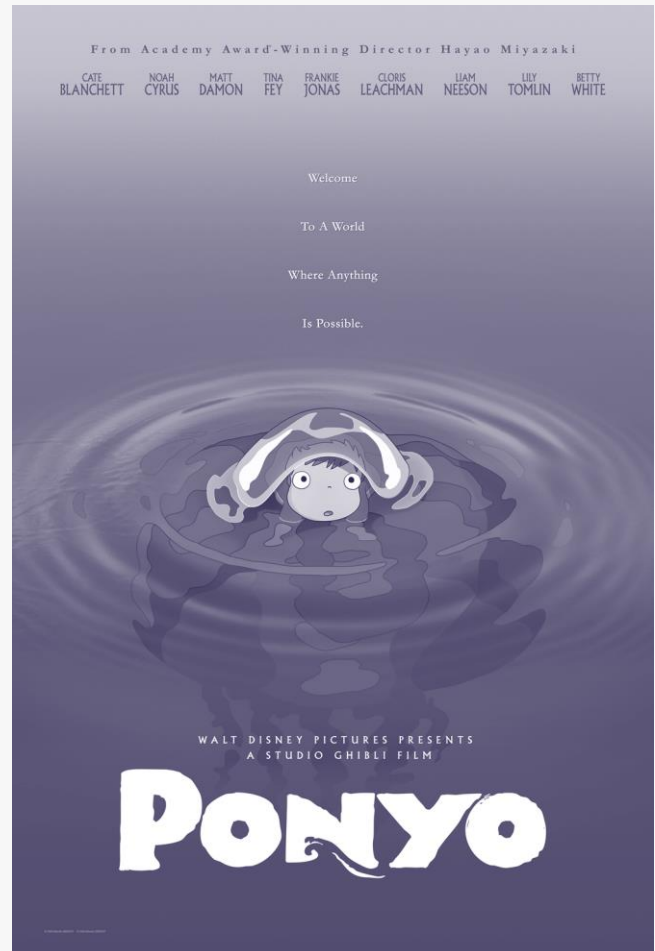
# Watch and learn.



Microwaving some popcorn and snuggling up together on the couch for a movie night is a family staple in many homes. Why not make it a global learning experience by adding a few foreign films into the rotation? If you're not one for reading subtitles, don't worry. There's an abundance of child-friendly, English-language films out there that at least promote global themes. Check out a few of our favorites in this chapter.

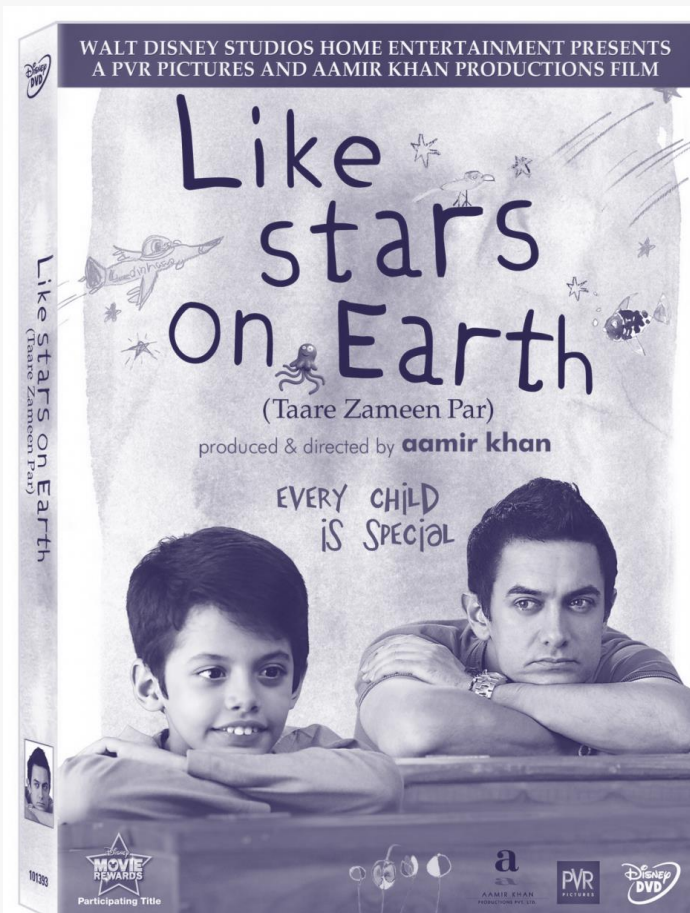
## Ponyo

This all-ages, Japanese take on The Little Mermaid has all of the magic, without all of the romantic fixation. A young boy rescues a goldfish named Ponyo, and the two become wonderful friends until Ponyo's father forces her back to the sea. In her attempt to become human and reunite with her friend, Ponyo causes a great storm that endangers her home. *Rated: G*



## Like Stars on Earth

A young boy in India is sent off to boarding school by his parents, who think he is a troublemaker. Only the school's art teacher can see through his act and unlock his potential. Beware that the film is rated PG for brief violence and language, but will truly impart upon your children that every child has something to offer. *Rated: PG*



Foreign films are a remarkable way for children to immerse themselves in another culture for an hour or two. Follow up your foreign film night with a chat about the movie. What did your children learn about the country and culture in which it took place? Did anything happen that they didn't understand? Take the extra time to ensure that your children take something away from the film, other than a night well spent with family members.





## CHAPTER SIX

# EXPLORE GEOGRAPHY

# Give context to culture.



Many of us are woefully inadequate when it comes to geography—being able to identify Sierra Leone on a map is considered an impressive feat. But studying geography plays a big role in shaping global citizens. Knowledge of the size, location, climate, resources, and other geographical features of a country or region is critical to understanding different economic standing, political practices, and cultural values.

For very young children, “the world” probably means their home, school, and community. Introducing the outside world imparts the massive scale of the international community. As kids learn about other cultures and countries, they will come to understand that there are many different ways to live as there are place to live in.

Introduce geography hand-in-hand with new cultures to give them context.

- **Use maps:** Hang a world map prominently in your home. Pick a new country to focus on each week or month, and place a thumbtack in that country on the map. You can measure the distance from your city to that country with a string so your children can see where the country is relative to their home. Map-based puzzles also offer a fun, hands-on way for kids to learn what country is where.
- **Go beyond the borders:** Identifying countries on a map is a great first step, but geography is much more than that. Discuss features like the climate, terrain, population, and available natural resources. Providing that background information will help your children understand why people of that region adopt certain behaviors and customs.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# FOSTER MULTI- CULTURAL FRIENDSHIPS

# Worlds with friends.

Our children are coming of age in an even more diverse society than the one we grew up in. In their future, learning to respect and interact with peers from all backgrounds will be as important as operating a computer.

Forming meaningful cross-cultural relationships is also an effective means of reducing prejudice and building respect for cultural differences. Encourage your children to form friendships with children from all backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities.

- **Lead by example:** Expand your own circle of friends to include people of diverse backgrounds. Having more friends never hurt anyone, and chances are some of them will have children your kids can play with.



- **Attend local cultural events:** If your local library is hosting an international film night, grab you kids and go. If there's an ethnic food festival nearby, head down and try the offerings. Cultural events are a great place to seek out other like-minded families who are interested in learning about other cultures. Encourage your children to reach out to other kids at these events.
- **Encourage inclusiveness:** Teach your children to be inclusive—on the playground, in the classroom, when making plans, etc. Even if your community is fairly homogenous, your children will come to understand the importance of accepting and including others.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# WRITE TO AN INTERNATIONAL PEN PAL



# A new perspective sealed in an envelope.

Writing to pen pals across the globe gives your children an authentic, personal window into another culture. Exchanging letters provides kids with a chance not only to learn about another country and lifestyle, but also to reflect on and explain their own behaviors and customs.

Services like [International Pen Friends](#) will match a child as young as 8 with his or her peers from around the world to exchange good old-fashioned letters.





Writing and receiving letters is an easy, engaging way for your children to make international connections. It offers your kids the unique benefit of asking questions and learning what specifically interests them about another culture or lifestyle. The experience can be as informal or formal as you wish—from simply exchanging one letter per month to sending small holiday gift packages with items from your respective countries.

## CHAPTER NINE

# CELEBRATE FOREIGN HOLIDAYS

# Make a party of global learning.

Global learning should not be a passive experience. Your children need to interact with another culture in a meaningful, memorable way. Make the experience of learning about new places, religions, and customs more exciting by celebrating major holidays from around the world.

Your children will be having so much fun celebrating, they won't even realize they're learning to be more accept and appreciate other religions, customs, and beliefs.





You can pretend you're in India during **Diwali** by making your own Rangoli designs, like the one shown here. This Indian folk art is meant to welcome the Hindu deities, and is thought to bring luck.



Instead of using the traditional colored rice or flour, grab some colored sand, a tube of glue, and a stack of construction paper from the craft store. When craft time is over, you'll be able to hang up the finished designs year-round!



During **Chinese New Year**, decorate your home, attend a parade in a nearby city (or watch online, if there isn't one close by), and give your children their allowance in the traditional red envelopes, but be sure to avoid any amounts considered unlucky by the Chinese! It's a perfect time to discuss the zodiac, among other Chinese traditions and beliefs.



Even the holidays you traditionally celebrate can feature a global twist. If you celebrate Christmas, hang ornaments from various countries on your tree, and incorporate Christmas rituals from around the world.

## CHAPTER TEN

# HOST AN EXCHANGE STUDENT



# Bring the world to your doorstep.



An exchange student serves as a cultural ambassador, a window into another country living under your own roof. Hosting an exchange student is a big commitment, but there's no better way to give your children an opportunity to truly connect with another culture from their own home. While it's certainly something that should be discussed in-depth amongst your entire family, sponsoring a foreign student is an unparalleled chance to practice interacting with and understanding someone from abroad.

Hosting a foreign exchange student will teach your children to:

- **Accept cultural differences:** It's hard to ignore unfamiliar behaviors when they're occurring in your own home on a daily basis. It's also easier to accept and understand those behaviors when they come from someone with whom you feel personally connected.
- **Be confident while interacting with diverse people:** Your children will have a leg up when it comes to socializing and working with diverse people at school, at work, in daily life, and beyond.
- **Connect with a faraway place:** An exchange student quite literally puts a face on another country, making the events that occur there feel closer to home. This connection encourages your children to be empathetic to the goings-on of other countries and communities.



# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

# Break down the language barrier.

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The more languages they can speak, the more windows to the world we are giving to our children.”

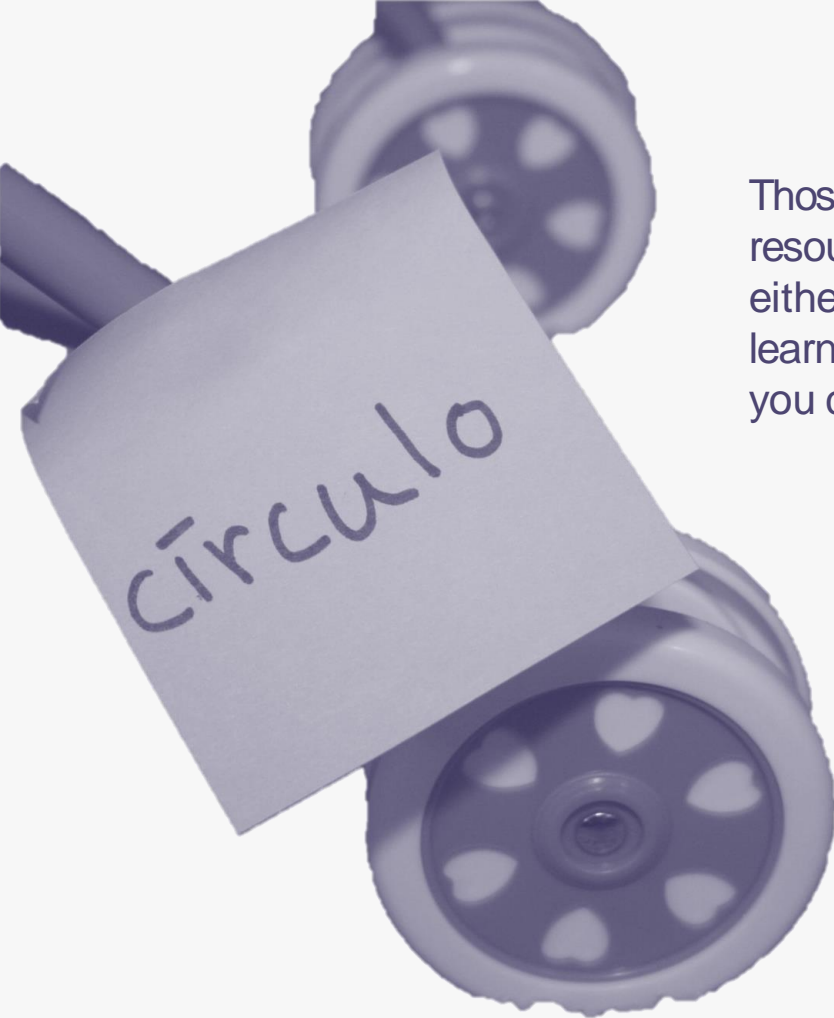
- Stephanie Meade, InCultureParent

Part of raising globally-minded children is equipping them with the skills they will need to succeed in an increasingly global world. Learning a new language will open many doors to your children, both professionally and socially. That's not to mention the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, including sharper critical thinking and better multi-tasking skills. Speaking a second language equips your children with the ability to communicate with an entire new population.

Language learning is a lifelong process, so starting as early as possible is ideal. Don't wait until high school to expose your children to a new language. If your school district does not offer language courses starting in elementary school, take it upon yourself to oversee your children's language education.

- **Teach them your native language:** If you are bilingual yourself, this one is a no brainer. Start speaking to your children in your native language from birth and make it a point to use both languages in the home.
- **Hire a tutor:** If you don't speak another language, consider hiring a tutor, or even a baby-sitter, for weekly sessions in your language of choice. Don't count out hiring [online tutors](#), if you need the flexibility.
- **Invest in language software:** The internet is a treasure trove of free language resources, but if you want a proven solution, with more structure, consider investing in a software program. Our [Byki Deluxe](#) program will make it fun and easy for your children to learn 2000+ vocabulary words covering 100+ common topics, from animals to weather.





Those tutoring sessions and online resources don't have to be just for the kids, either. Lead by example and commit to learning a language as a whole family, so you can practice together.

If you take on the challenge with your children, you'll be able to incorporate the language into your other efforts at raising them globally, including watching movies, listening to music, trying new recipes, reading books, and even writing to their pen pals—all in another language!

No matter how you approach teaching your children another language, make sure they are engaged on a daily basis, even if it's just for a few minutes. Label items around your house with vocabulary on Monday, learn a new Byki vocabulary list on Tuesday, sit down with the tutor on Wednesday, and so on. This daily exposure will help sustain what they have learned and build their confidence in using the language in daily life.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# CHECK OUT YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY



# Make use of local resources.

Yes, we promised you thirteen ways to raise a globally-minded child from the comfort of your home, but we promise this one is worth getting off the couch for. Many parents fear that a global education will empty out their wallets, but it's quite the opposite. Your local library is a multi-cultural goldmine.



If you're in need of books, the library is the place to go. But there's so much more available: music, movies, maps, magazines, and beyond. Hundreds of libraries around the U.S. even offer subscriptions to Transparent Language Online, which includes access to the Byki materials we mentioned earlier. All of the resources are free, not to mention there's probably a helpful librarian behind the circulation desk who is eager to help you and your child on your global learning journey.

Be sure to also ask your librarians about any international programs they may sponsor at the library. Particularly in communities with large immigrant populations, libraries will often host family-friendly events geared towards learning about new cultures.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# DEVELOP RELATED SKILLS

# Develop cross-cultural competence.

Global-mindedness is so much more than just learning about other cultures. When teaching international awareness at home, don't forget to focus on the small things, the qualities and traits that go hand-in-hand with cultural competency:

- **Practice patience:** Teach your children the discipline of waiting. Being able to watch and observe before jumping to conclusions or making hasty decisions is paramount to global success.
- **Encourage curiosity:** Don't focus so much on developing global mindedness that you stifle your children's other interests. Encourage your children to be curious, explore, and try new things. This sense of adventure naturally lends itself to a global mindset.
- **Make mistakes:** We all want to protect our children, but they also need to learn how to calculate risks. Allow your children to fail, and inspire them to learn from those failures and persevere.

- **Instill empathy:** Make it a point to do some kind of volunteer work with your children. It will give them a chance to be grateful for their own good fortune, and give back to those less fortunate. Developing a strong sense of empathy will help your kids connect with events taking place from afar, and contribute their own skills and time to the global community.

Global citizens are not just worldly, multi-lingual vagabonds. Succeeding in our increasingly globalized world will take patience, flexibility, curiosity, observation, independence, empathy, and beyond. Take small steps to instill these traits in your children—it will serve them well no matter what their future may hold.

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“Globalization, technology, and the ubiquity of communications have brought the world into our neighborhood, and with the world in their backyard, our children must understand how to both live and thrive in it. Raising children to be global citizens isn’t a choice; it’s a necessity.”

- Steve Miranda, “Raising Global Children”

# Give your children a head start on a new language with KidSpeak™!

You can still raise multilingual children even if you don't speak another language! Beat your school district to the proverbial punch with KidSpeak™.



Available in 11 languages, this desktop software was designed specifically for children ages 6 and up, in terms of difficulty but also interest. All words and phrases are suitable for *young* beginners, not adult beginners. From school supplies to sports to animals making fun noises, your kids will learn vocabulary they'll actually use in the years to come.

[Learn more!](#)