



*Families in Global Transition*

# FIGT Connections

Where Research Comes to Life

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Families in Global Transition leads the worldwide community in empowering families and those who serve them in global transition. FIGT is the premier advocate and educational resource for families, organizations and service providers.

## SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2014 FIGT CONFERENCE!



*Families in Global Transition*

We are excited to announce that the next FIGT conference will be held in Washington DC on 21-23 MARCH 2014!

In today's world the global family is transient and diverse. FIGT's 2014 conference will explore what the global family looks like and how to support them in today's world.

The theme for the 2014 FIGT Conference is:

### The Global Family: Redefined

We will have lots of updates over the coming months, but for now - save the date!

This year, we will be launching a new conference schedule and a more streamlined proposal submission process. Our goal is to maintain both the levels of expertise and breadth of content for which FIGT is known. The conference will feature a Keynote speaker, along with concurrent sessions and ever-popular Kitchen Table Conversations.

New this year is a pilot project to make the sessions available online. More information will be coming over the next few months.

Save the date, plan to join us, and pass the word on!

### Become an FIGT Member Today!

In March 2012, FIGT launched a new membership program, [click here](#) to learn more or join today!

#### Connect with FIGT



### 2013 Conference Sponsors

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### A RECAP OF THE FIRST FIGT HAPPY HOUR

FIGT had its very first happy hour in early summer. It was great to bring together first timers and veterans of the FIGT community. The gathering was well attended. It included people of diverse backgrounds embarking a journey of transition, assimilation and finding one's self.

We had great discussions on what FIGT means to us and the benefits of being a member.

Here are a few highlights of our discussion:

- FIGT offering an accreditation program: professional accreditation is valuable to academics and professionals of specific industries
- Membership program: it would be good for FIGT to offer "a

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pay as you go" option (i.e. in favor of networking events/webinars that are free to members, small fee to non-members)

- Audience: does FIG T need to cater to one type of industry (ex. Researchers or corporate); why should we narrow ourselves? Are we trying to relate to Exxon Corporation or kids of Exxon employees? Overall consensus everyone is welcome to FIGT.
- Networking Events: suggest meeting every 3 months (once a quarter) vs. monthly
- John Liang organizes a monthly TCK Happy Hour - more information to come.

**Meal Sponsor**

If you missed it... no worries we'll do it soon again.



[Click here](#) for Sponsor Opportunities

## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN SAY GOODBYE

*Contributed by Norman Viss, an expatriate coach who has many years of broad international experience working with people from a wide variety of cultures, including a 10 year span of living in Nigeria, West Africa, and 22 years in the Netherlands. Currently he lives in the Philadelphia, USA and blogs at the Everyday Expat Support Center.*

Our family was preparing to leave our expat posting after six years of life there. Our four children ranged in age from seven to thirteen. When the weeks of the 'last times' came, I began to be embarrassed by my 13-year-old son's behavior. A friend, teacher or other significant adult friend would come up and say to him, "Goodbye, good luck, and it's been really nice having you as a friend." He would look the other direction, act very uncomfortable, and then walk away. I was angry at him for being, what I considered, rude.

Upon further reflection, I realized that he had never been in a position before where he had to say goodbye as an older child. He actually did not know the words to say goodbye. I had thought through what I wanted to say in farewell to people I knew in various roles: close friends, acquaintances, my children's teachers, co-workers, co-members of groups and associations, household staff. But I had never helped my children think through those words of farewell.

To read more, [click here!](#)

## THIRD CULTURE KIDS: EXPERIENCES OF IDENTITY FORMATION

### JOANNA WITHERS

In a world where migration is common some might wonder if the Third Culture Kid (TCK) identity is still relevant. To examine this we must return to Pollock and VanReken's (2009) now classic definition: A TCK is a person who has spent a significant part of their developmental years in a culture other than their parents' culture.

For those familiar with this definition they might note that I have cut it somewhat shorter than usual, and quite deliberately so because what Pollock and VanReken (2009) proceed to talk about are the consequences of the TCK lifestyle such as feeling at home in multiple cultures and defining their sense of belonging in relationship to those who have had similar experiences to themselves rather than a geographical location. Consider these characteristics alongside the notion that every home for a TCK is transitory we can conclude that the TCK identity is one which remains distinct from that of migrants.

Having lived abroad and met many TCK's I am fascinated by their process of identity mediation. A few qualitative studies have considered issues of identity and belonging amongst TCK's, however significant

gaps remain in the research (Fail, Thomson, & Walker, 2004; Lyttle, Barker, & Cornwell, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). Most of the qualitative research takes a retrospective approach asking Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCK's) to look back at their experiences. Studies vary in the age of participants, but for some they are looking back up to fifty years on their TCK childhood. Whilst as Fail (2004) acknowledges such a retrospective approach can be beneficial in encouraging present-day international school students it cannot adequately explore the phenomenon of the transient TCK lifestyle and the implications transition has on their process of identity mediation. To continue reading, please [click here](#).