Your Comprehensive Checklist for Moving to Nagoya as an Expat Family

Moving cities or states can be a stressful experience for families. But moving countries adds a whole level of pressure for families to navigate! As you embark on this exciting journey, we want to provide you with a helpful guide to ensure as smooth and stress-free relocation process as possible that helps your entire family prepare for this exciting adventure.

Relocation Support

- ☐ **Relocation Help:** Check if your employer provides access to a relocation company or agent or if they are providing that support here. Using a relocation company is the best way to support your international move and transition for all non-school related matters.
- ☐ **Ask Questions!:** Utilize their expertise to navigate the relocation process smoothly.

Visa and Immigration

- ☐ **Gather Required Documents:** Research and compile all necessary documents for your visa application, including passports, proof of employment, and any additional paperwork specific to your visa type.
- ☐ **Lean on Support:** Seek guidance from immigration consultants or your employer's HR department to navigate the visa application process smoothly.
- ☐ **Keep Copies:** Make copies of all important visa documents and keep them in a safe place. Also, save electronic copies in case of emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.

Housing

- ☐ **Location Preferences:** Identify preferred neighborhoods or areas based on proximity to workplaces, schools, and public transportation (if needed), that fit your family's desired lifestyle.
- ☐ **Property Type:** Decide on the type of housing that best suits your family's needs, such as a house, duplex/townhome, or apartment.
- ☐ **Property Listings:** If using a relocation company, start browsing their property listings so you are prepared to make a timely decision upon arrival.
- ☐ **Commute:** Consider the commute to work from potential areas and assess transportation options for convenience.
- ☐ **School Proximity:** Choose a location that matches your family's lifestyle and ease of access to school.

School Enrollment

- ☐ **Research International Schools:** With a range of options available, spend some time researching schools in Nagoya to find the best-fit for your family. Ask questions about the school mission, curriculum, university acceptances, support for any special needs your child may have, sports and after school activities, etc.
- ☐ **Application Deadlines:** Begin this journey early, as classes may be full; you may need to submit applications well in advance of your move.
- ☐ **Admission Criteria:** Most private and international schools are selective. Learn about each school's admission criteria and any specific requirements and deadlines, such as academic records, school reports, teacher recommendation forms, any testing that may be required before admissions decisions can be made, and the need for on-site interviews as part of the process.
- ☐ **School Tours:** If you are coming to Japan on a pre-move visit, schedule a school tour to meet with admissions staff; or, see if a virtual meeting or visit is possible to get a firsthand look at the facilities, classrooms, and overall learning environment.
- ☐ **Tuition and Fees:** Seek information on school tuition, fees, and any additional expenses to prepare for educational costs. Your employer may cover some (or all) of the fees; it is best to confirm with your company in advance what will and will not be supported.
- ☐ **School Transportation:** Inquire about school bus services and how to arrange for school bus registration.
- ☐ **Extracurricular Activities:** Inquire about the variety of extracurricular activities available at the school and how they can enrich your child's learning experience.
- ☐ **Accreditation and Recognition:** Verify accreditations to ensure the school meets top-tier academic standards and offers a reputable educational program. Just because a school has "International" in the name doesn't mean that it is an accredited program that guarantees a smooth transition back to your home country's school system.





Language and Communication

- ☐ **Language:** Consider learning basic Japanese phrases for easier communication upon arrival; some Japanese language apps include Duolingo, FluentU, and more.
- ☐ **Cultural Etiquette:** Take some time to learn about Japanese culture, customs, gestures, and etiquette to avoid misunderstandings and show respect in daily interactions. And enjoy learning about the many intricacies of Japan!
- ☐ **Translation Apps:** Download translation apps to your smartphone for quick and easy communication when facing language barriers. We recommend DeepL, Google Translate, PapaGo, and WayGo.

Social Networking and Transition Support

- ☐ **Expat Groups:** Join expat or foreigner-friendly groups or online communities in Nagoya to connect with fellow expatriate families, including local Facebook groups, ACCJ, TJCS, and CCEA.
- ☐ **School Networking:** See if it is possible to reach out to other parents or the PTA for networking opportunities with other families in the schools you are considering.
- ☐ **Virtual Networking:** Utilize online platforms and social media to connect with people living in Nagoya before your arrival.

Healthcare

- ☐ **Research Local Healthcare:** Familiarize yourself with the health coverage your employer provides and the healthcare system and the services available in Japan.
- ☐ **Vaccination and Medical Records:** Update your family's vaccination records and gather all relevant medical documents, including prescriptions and medical histories.

Hidden Gems

- ☐ **Research Local Gems:** Dive into Nagoya's rich culture and history by researching lesser-known attractions and local gems! Have each member of your family develop a list of their top destinations and activities.
- ☐ **Try New Cuisine:** Explore Nagoya's diverse culinary scene and indulge in local delicacies. Try out a local Japanese restaurant in your hometown and familiarize yourself with Japanese cuisine.
- ☐ **Embrace Change:** Embrace the adventure with an open mind and positive attitude! Moving to a new country can be a transformative experience for the whole family. Embrace the changes, embrace the new culture, and embrace the exciting opportunities that Nagoya has to offer.

Transportation

- ☐ **Research Public Transportation:** Familiarize yourself with Nagoya's public transportation system, including trains, buses, and subways.
- ☐ **Obtain an International Driving Permit:** If you plan to drive in Nagoya, make sure you have an International Driving Permit (IDP) before arriving. But also be aware that the use of an IDP is limited to a year. If you plan to be in Japan longer, consider the process of getting a Japanese license.
- ☐ **Public Transport Apps:** Download apps that provide real-time updates on public transportation schedules and routes including Hyperdia, or free apps like Jorudan and Google Maps.
- ☐ **Commute Options:** Determine the best commuting options to schools, workplaces, and other essential destinations that are important for everyone in your family.
- ☐ **School Bus Services:** Inquire about school bus services provided by the schools you are considering. Understand the bus routes, schedules, and safety protocols for your children's daily commute.

This checklist aims to provide essential information and guidance to help you navigate the relocation process and feel well-prepared for your new adventure in Nagoya. Please note that while Nagoya International School (NIS) is dedicated to supporting incoming families with valuable resources to help with all of the relocation questions you may have, we do not directly offer assistance for finding actual housing options - we leave that to the relocation specialists who can assist with that! And, as a private school, please also note that NIS requires all families to go through our application process, regardless of the company affiliation or country of origin. In fact, the application process is what helps us learn how we can best support your child and your family. **Let's set the groundwork for a stress-free move to Nagoya!**

www.nis.ac.jp