



Raising Kids in Reunion

Having grown up in South Africa, I spent most of my **childhood** playing outside. We would spend hours in the garden around the house, **climbing** trees, making mud pies and building tents. We would ride our bikes and play with other kids in the street. Summers were spent **splashing** about in the pool and holidays and long weekends were enjoyed down at the beach with family and friends.

South Africa has very sunny weather like Reunion, and even though it doesn't have a tropical climate, it certainly doesn't have cold winters like in Europe. So you can only imagine that I find the outdoor life we get to enjoy here in Reunion great for kids.

I love our regular trips down to the beach - playing in the sand, chasing crabs, swimming and watching the multi-coloured fish in the sea. Mother Nature offers us such a fascinating classroom without the restrictions of four brick walls. I love the freedom my family enjoys while walking **barefoot** outside, with the big blue sky and elegant **white-tailed tropicbirds** above our heads. I love sitting in the **motley** shade of an old, **wise** tree! The **year-round** picnicking and walking in the forests and fresh air are also a real pleasure.

Apart from the climate and natural **surroundings**, I also adore the fact that Reunion has such a multi-cultural society – a group of people that generally lives respectfully and peacefully amongst each other. I just love seeing the kids at my daughter's crèche playing together. Kids from African, Indian, Asian and European descent all mixed up in the same activity, playing as absolute equals. I hope that these little **beings** will not learn the prejudices that are so present in the world we live in today.

A mixed race society, **unfortunately**, wasn't the case for me when I attended **playschool** at the end of the apartheid era. So these points all make raising kids in Reunion quite **delightful**.

Being far away from family, however, is not always so easy. The grandparents are not around to enjoy the **growing up** and everyday doings of their grandchildren... or to lend a helping hand to sometimes **exhausted** parents!

And as you all know, travelling can be a very **pricey** affair from Reunion. We have a huge travel budget every year. Flying to mainland France and South Africa to visit family and friends **during** school holidays ends up **costing us an arm and a leg**. So as for everything in life, there are **pros and cons** to all the decisions we make. The trick is to find a happy balance for a happy family!





Vocabulary

to raise - élever
childhood - enfance
to climb - grimper
to splash - éclabousser
barefoot - pieds nus

white-tailed tropicbird - paille-en-queue
motley - hétéroclite
wise - sage
year-round - pendant toute l'année
surroundings - environnement

a being - un être
unfortunately - malheureusement
playschool – garderie
delightful - enchanteur
to grow up - grandir

exhausted - épuisé
pricey - coûteux
during - pendant
to cost an arm and a leg - coûter un bras
the pros and cons - les pors et les contres