

Moving With Children Survival Kit

Helping your Children Adjust to the Move

Your family's move can be an exciting time for your children and for you. It can also be a stressful and sad time. Your child may have different feelings about your family's move: scared about going to a new school, excited about your new home, sad about leaving old friends or angry with you about moving.

There are several things that you as a parent can do to support your child through this tough time.

Below you will find a checklist provided to remind you of some of the important things to do before and after a move (and tips on what to do to help your child cope with this life event). Moving is one of the most stressful times in anyone's life.

Before Your Move

- ✓ Get information from the local Chamber of Commerce, Welcome Wagon and Board of Realtors about the new place.
- ✓ Tell older, school-age children about the move several months in advance, if possible.
- ✓ Let them help plan for the care of plants and/or pets during the move.
- ✓ Share information about your new home, town and state with your child. Give him/her brochures and postcards. create a fun project that offers information about the new place (e.g., make a map or draw pictures of the new house).
- ✓ When possible, take your child to see his/her new town, house and neighborhood.
- ✓ Visit your child's future school. Schedule time to meet the principal and some of the teachers and future classmates ahead of time.
- ✓ Have a "good-bye old friends" party. Involve them in the planning. Help them get addresses and phone numbers of friends and family they will be leaving.
- ✓ Involve them in organizing a tag sale or charity donation of toys, clothing, books, etc.

- ✓ Request that your child's school records be sent to his/her new school. Obtain medical and dental records for you and your children.

Coping With Moving Day

- ✓ Prepare a "ready box" that can be first off the van; stock it with things you will need immediately upon arrival, such as snacks, kitchen items, bathroom toiletries, games, pillows, special comfort items and hand tools, etc.
- ✓ While packing and unpacking are in progress, consider having a sitter or friend watch your infants or younger children.
- ✓ Don't let children run in and about the mover's van and equipment, distracting the crew from their work and professional services.
- ✓ Let younger kids color or put stickers on their boxes so they will be immediately recognizable coming off the moving van.
- ✓ Put a set of sheets, towels, and personal items (blankets, toys, stuffed animals for smaller children) in each child's dresser drawer to speed bed-making and settling-in on the first night in your new home.
- ✓ Listen to your child's feelings (sad, scared, excited) about the move and offer extra support.

Let the children help pack their belongings so they feel like they participated in the move. Just as it is important to let your children participate in the packing of their belongings, it is also vital to let them help with the unpacking. Getting their rooms organized should be a top priority, once you reach your destination. This will make them feel that this strange house is now their new home. Consider keeping some boxes from the move for kids to play with - old moving boxes make great forts, castles, or anything else they imagine.

After Your Move

- ✓ Involve your children in plans to decorate their new bedrooms or play areas, including color choices, decoration, and arrangement of furniture.
- ✓ Make some exploratory trips into the community with your child such as visiting neighborhood parks, nearby restaurants or a skating rink.
- ✓ Take your child to enroll in his/her new school and meet teachers and classmates.
- ✓ Discuss extracurricular options with your child and sign up for some activities such as piano lessons, gymnastics, Girl/Boy Scouts, sports, clubs at schools, library programs.
- ✓ Encourage your child to call or write friends and family to let them know about the new place.
- ✓ Help your child take pictures of your new home to send to friends and relatives.
- ✓ Make new friends and become involved and active in your new community immediately. Your children will follow your example during this period of transition.

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