

MOVING

Most children will move at least once during their childhood. While moving can often bring adventure and excitement, it can also mean leaving the easy familiarity of home, school, and neighborhood, and saying good-bye to cherished friends and schoolmates. Through a child's eyes, even a move of a short distance is likely to seem major. The following hints will help ease the transition.

- Involve your child in the move as much as possible. As tempting as it may be to send your child off to grandma's while you attend to a million details, reconsider! Your youngster gains control over the scary unknown by participating directly in move-related activities. For example, have your child pack and label a box of favorite belongings to be opened immediately upon arrival.
- Familiarize your child with the community before your move. Distance permitting, drive to your new home and neighborhood a few times prior to relocating. Subscribe to a local newspaper. Call the Chamber of Commerce for pamphlets describing your new community. Start a scrapbook containing photographs of your new surroundings: home, backyard, child's room, school, and playground.
- Retain some ties to the past. Encourage your child to write or send cards to old playmates. Arrange periodic calls or visits.
- Read books together on how other children have coped with moving.
- Talk over family feelings about the move. Acknowledge feelings of sadness and hesitation along with the positive ones. Ask what worries and also excites your child most about the move. Stress that it will take a while to adjust to the new surroundings and feel settled again. Emphasize the support and security of the family itself.
- Once relocated, join the new neighborhood. Befriend parents with children your child's age. Join a family-oriented community center. If your child is interested, organize or find a scouts or campfire group. Search out music, sports, or dance opportunities. (This is especially good in the summer months when the ready-made activities of school are not yet available). Above all, let your child observe you taking steps to become involved yourself.

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