

& KIDS THE MOVE



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Moving can be a stressful task if you're single, but when you have children it can become even more delicate. While it can be easy for an adult to just pack up and move, children are more sensitive to relocation. They may not want to leave their school or move away from their friends to make new ones in another place.

But there are ways to make the transition smoother. This piece will provide you with some tips to help your children prepare for the move. We'll include some games to make the trip more fun for them, along with suggestions to help integrate the kids into their new home. And, hopefully, you'll have some fun just like your children.



PREPARING YOUR CHILDREN BEFORE THE MOVE

The first thing you should do is involve your children in the process. It will be less jarring for them if they feel included in the decision making rather than if you just tell them, "This is where we're going." Here are a few ways to accomplish this.

MAKE A FAMILY WISH LIST

Your first step will be to start a wish list with your kids. This will help you come to mutual decisions about what everyone wants from their new home. It might a bigger backyard, a larger basement or separate room for each of the children.

HOUSE HUNT AS A FAMILY

If possible, take your children with you as you look for new homes so that they can see it for themselves. If you're looking online, then save some of your favorites and show them to the kids to let them offer their opinions.

LET THE CHILDREN PLAN THEIR NEW ROOMS

A child's room is his or her personal space, so make sure your child feels he or she has a say in the room in the new house. Bring home some paint samples so that your child can choose a color, then turn this into an art project by having him or her paste pictures of the bed or other furniture onto colored paper to see what the new room would look like.



PACK A TREASURE BOX

When preparing to move, give your child his or her own box to fill up, decorate and use for favorite items. Let the child keep it close by in the car.

THROW A GOODBYE PARTY

Give your kids (and yourself) the chance to say goodbye to your home with one last party. If you're leaving, then you might as well leave in style.

VISIT FAVORITE NEIGHBORHOOD SPOTS

If you're moving a significant distance, then be sure to take your children to special locations around the neighborhood one last time. Let them visit their favorite stores or restaurants and say goodbye to the people most important to them, such as babysitters or friends.

CREATE A MEMORY BOOK

Let your child put together a book of photos of your home, along with friends' pictures and contact information so they still feel connected to their old place.

SAY GOODBYE PROPERLY

When having dinner in your home for the last few times, ask your kids to recall a favorite memory inside the house.

ANSWER YOUR KIDS' QUESTIONS HONESTLY

Your children are going to have multiple questions about the move, so don't shut them down. Take time to answer them properly and honestly. Provide as many details as you can to make sure your child understands everything and becomes more comfortable with the decision. A family meeting is a great way to accomplish this.

COMMON QUESTIONS INCLUDE:



Why are we moving?

Is the dog/pet coming with us?

What's my new school/neighborhood/city like?

Will I make new friends?

MOVING DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

If you are moving your child during the academic year, then be sure to follow these tips to make things easier for everyone involved.

TALK TO THE NEW SCHOOL'S ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS

Any teacher or school official would tell you it makes the transition much easier if the school knows about your child's arrival as far in advance as possible, particularly if he or she has any special needs or if there were any problems at the old school. Teachers and staff are there to help you with this process, so help them in return.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD

Talk to your son or daughter about how he or she feels about the move. If your kid is shy or struggles academically, they might be more apprehensive about stepping into a new environment. Each child will have his or her own way of responding to this change. Some might voice their opinions, while others might withdraw. Ask them what they need, how you can help and how they are feeling. And don't just ask; sympathize with the child, because the move is likely harder on them than it is on you. The sooner you start the dialogue, the sooner they will respond and the sooner the transition can begin.



ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO GET INVOLVED AT THE NEW SCHOOL

This applies to both school activities and making friends. Discuss the after-school options with your child and encourage them to get involved in clubs or sports you know they enjoy. Find out in advance who runs these activities and talk to them about getting your child involved.

Your child will likely be upset about leaving his or her friends behind, and that's perfectly fine. Be sensitive to that and

encourage your child to stay in touch with the friends they have made. But also be sure to encourage him or her to make new friends at the school. One way to do this is to ask the new teacher if any of the students would like to be pen pals with your child. This is a great way to ease into the transition.

When you do arrive, try to make sure your child balances the contact between old and new friends. After a few weeks, your son or daughter will likely spend more time and attention on the new friends.



STAY IN TOUCH WITH NEW SCHOOL TEACHERS AND FACULTY

Once you move and it seems like your child has adjusted, you'll still need to keep the lines of communication open with the school. Try to schedule meetings with the teachers and faculty to get a sense of how your child is adjusting. Teachers often see signs of problems before parents do, because children can sometimes hide issues from their parents, as they want them to think everything is fine.

TRY TO MOVE DURING ACTIVE SCHOOL DAYS

It might seem like a good idea to move during the holidays or the summer, but it's actually easier for kids to adjust during school time. It can be more difficult for your son or daughter to adjust to a new city or neighborhood if you make the move during holidays or summertime because the chances of their making new friends are low. Once school starts again, your child could feel even more excluded because everyone else will be returning to see their friends and acting excited, which could make your kid feel like a stranger.

If you move during the school, then your child can move smoothly from one social setting to another. The teachers and other children are more likely to pay more attention to and spend more time with your child if he or she is the only new student.

DOES AGE MATTER?

When moving your child, **age certainly makes a difference**. Generally, younger children will cope better with a transition than older ones. Infants and extremely young children could be confused by what's happening, so try to explain to them what's happening and make it seem like a fun adventure.

Children in grammar school most commonly worry about making new friends and fitting in at their new school, so try to address these concerns with the aforementioned tips.

Teenagers can be difficult, as they have likely had the same friends for years, and these friends provide them with a sense of identity. Therefore, they may be the most resistant to change. Again, use the tips above to try and make the transition as smooth as possible for them.

DURING THE MOVE

Moving is stressful, so the key is to turn it into a game of sorts. If you're enjoying yourself, then your kids won't feel as tense and upset about the move. Here are some tips.

MAKE A PLAYLIST

A good soundtrack makes everything better, so start there. Create a playlist of songs that the whole family loves and use it while packing and unpacking. Be sure to take a few moments to dance and sing to lighten the mood.



STICK TO YOUR ROUTINE

Your schedule is already packed, and now you have to add moving on top of it. But do your best to stick to your normal routine to help your kids feel comfortable. If you normally watch football together on Sundays or make tacos on Tuesday night, then continue to do that. If you stop, then your child will associate sadness and other negative feelings with the move, which is the last thing you want to happen. Children often don't understand that things will go back to normal after you move because they are concerned about missing those things right now, so you need to keep providing them.

MAKE A SCRAPBOOK

If you can't make an entire book, start to gather some supplies and photos for it. This way, your child will look forward to the move so he or she can complete the book.

TURN THE MOVE INTO A MINI VACATION

If you're moving a great distance, then take an extra day or two to stop at some exciting places along the way. If you are only moving a few blocks away, then set up a tent in your yard and take your kids on an adventure. If you need to paint their new room, then their sleeping outside will give it a chance to dry.

WARNING SIGNS

The transition to the new location can be difficult, but there are plenty of ways to make it easier for you and the children. One key is to watch out for warning signs that your child is in distress.

Major changes like moving are always difficult for children, and even the most well-adjusted child can struggle with coping with a move. But the earlier you pick up on the signs, the better you'll be able to help your child.

COMMON WARNING SIGNS INCLUDE:



Withdrawn behavior



Loss of appetite



Sleeping problems (ex: nightmares)



Outbursts of anger or crying



Reluctance to be too far away from house or family



Difficulty making new friends

Address these issues as quickly as possible if you notice them.

SETTLING IN

Your task is not done once you arrive at your new home. You'll still need to help your child adjust to the transition. Understand that this time can be a grieving period of sorts for the child as he or she misses the old home. This could last a few weeks or even a few months, but you can take steps to make it easier.

LOOK AROUND YOUR NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

Much like the camping idea from earlier, make the move an adventure. Take your child on a journey through the new neighborhood. Explore the area and look for new and exciting locations.



VISIT THE NEW SCHOOL

Before classes start, visit the new school with your child. They'll feel more comfortable with you there, and you can help them get their bearings.

Once school starts, walk with them on their route for the first few days or weeks until they are comfortable going alone.

ENCOURAGE THEM TO GET INVOLVED

As we said earlier, encourage your child to get involved in after-school activities. This will help them make new friends with similar interests.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Here are some other miscellaneous tips for helping your child through the move.

BUY APPROPRIATE LITERATURE

There are numerous children's books on the market that will help kids understand and accept the move, as well as cope with their feelings.

CHILD PROOF YOUR HOUSE.

If you have very young children, then it would be wise to remove dangerous items and situations from your home.

EDUCATE YOUR CHILDREN.

The sooner your kids know the new address and phone number, the better.



Moving with your children may be a bit of a challenge, but hopefully our tips have helped ease your stresses. Make the move with ease by using Estes Suremove to ensure that your old home makes it to your new home without a hitch. Contact Estes today at **www.estessuremove.com**.



866.347.2260