

Moving with a family can be challenging. There are a lot of changes going on for you and your family. That's why it is critical to spend some time helping your kids cope with the changes going on around them. The advice set out in this guide will help your move go more smoothly.

### **When to Move School Age Kids**

When your kids are school age, you might be tempted to plan your move for the school holidays. In reality, this can actually make things harder for your kids. School is most likely the first place your kids can be assured of making friends. Thus, moving during the school holidays places your child in unfamiliar and new surroundings at a time when their chances of making friends are low.

- As school resumes, your child may feel even more left out. As the first day return to school is filled with the excitement and hustle and bustle that occurs after a holiday vacation, your child may feel like a stranger.
- When you schedule your move during the school year, it allows your kids to go from one social setting to another.
- The teacher and the other kids will be more willing to show your child some extra special attention when they are the only new person.

### **Does Age Make a Difference?**

- Generally speaking, the younger the child, the better they will cope with the transition of moving to a new home.
- Very young children and infants may be confused. It is a good idea to try to explain to them what's happening and make it like an adventure.
- The biggest worry that school age children endure is whether they will make new friends and fit in easily at their new school.
- Because teenagers' friends provide them with a sense of identity, it is more difficult for teens to feel comfortable with the idea of moving to a new home.

### **Before the Move**

- As you start making plans for your move, remember to focus on what your kids can look forward to.
- After all, if you see your move as an exciting adventure, your kids will also be very enthusiastic.
- Right from the start, you might want to take them with you on house-hunting adventures. In cases where it might not be practical to have them tagging along, don't forget to bring back pictures of hot prospects you're considering.
- After you've found the new home, be sure to take pictures of local places of interest.

### **Communication is the Key**

- Don't forget to keep the channels of communication open. Before and during your move, encourage your kids to tell you about their uncertainties.
- Most likely, you're probably feeling a little nervous about moving too (no matter how promising your new situation is likely to be).
- After your move, spend time together with your family. Listen to each other's stories so that you can be sure how everyone is coping with the change.

### **Getting the Kids Involved**

It's only natural that your kids will want to be involved with what's going on. Some examples of ways to get your kids involved are:

- Asking them to help plan for and organize your garage sale. They could make colorful posters to stick up around the neighborhood.
- Allowing them to choose a small number of toys or other items to keep with them on moving day.
- Empowering them by letting them pack and label a few of their own boxes
- Making sure they have a special job to take care of on moving day. This will help them feel as if they're making a valuable contribution.
- Allowing them to decide how their new rooms should be decorated and arranged.

## **What About Childcare?**

- Undoubtedly you will be offered a lot of conflicting advice whether you should keep your kids with you on moving day or arrange childcare.
- Keep in mind that you are the best judge of what's right for your kids.

## **Saying Goodbye**

- It is critical that your children have the enough time to say good-bye to the family members and friends they're leaving behind.
- You should encourage them to exchange contact information. Fortunately, for most of us today, our friends are only a few keystrokes away via e-mail.

## **Settling In**

Understand that it is like that there may be a grieving period for children...it may last a few weeks, perhaps even a few months. Here are a few easy things you can do to make moving easier for your kids.

- Investigate and explore your new neighborhood together. Look for new and exciting things.
- Go to your new child's school with them beforehand...walk around the new school together to help them find their bearings.
- Accompany your kids on their route to school until they are comfortable traveling by themselves.
- Seek out after-school activities where your children can make new friends with similar interests.
- Don't forget to encourage them to keep in touch with old friends.

## **Keeping an Eye Out for Early Warning Signs**

- A major change is always difficult for a child. Even the most well adjusted child can have difficulty coping with moving.
- Be watchful, it's important to pick up on early warning signs that your child may need extra help adjusting.

## **Here are some things to watch out for**

- Withdrawn behavior
- Loss of appetite
- Problems sleeping, or regular nightmares
- Outbursts of anger or tears
- Reluctance to stray far from the house or family
- Difficulty making new friends

## **Additional Hints for Moving Kids**

- There are children's books that help kids come to terms and understand an upcoming move, and cope with some of the feelings they may be experiencing.
- If you've got young children, it's important to remove dangerous situations and to child proof your home.
- The sooner you teach your kids your new address and phone number, the better.