

Preparing Your Child to Move

Moving is hard work, both physically and emotionally. And for children, moving can be particularly difficult. They will have many questions and concerns. Why do they have to move? Will they be able to make new friends? Will their new house have room for all their toys? Can they keep their pets? So before the packing begins, parents should start preparing their child for the big day.

Parents can begin to help their child by being as open and honest as appropriate for the child's age. Discuss the reasons behind the move. Schedule a family meeting or a special dinner out to spend time with your child. Patience is going to be paramount, as your child will likely have many ups and downs as the moving day approaches. Whenever possible, you should involve your child in decisions regarding the move. Help to give them back a little of the control they feel like they have lost. Above all, affirm their feelings, fears, and concern.

There are also some concrete ways to help with the move. To help your child feel more comfortable, begin by researching the area to which you are moving. What activities are available? If your child is in scouts, 4H, music, or sports, it will be comforting to know that they can continue these activities post move. If your child is old enough, let them help in the research. What is the weather like where you are moving? How about the schools? If feasible, arrange a visit to your new location. The more your child knows about their new neighborhood, the sooner they will be comfortable and ready to engage in new activities.

Enlist your child's help in designing the look of their new room. And there is no better way to start than to take a look at their current room. What do they like about it? What would they like to change? Talk about color schemes and wallpaper borders. Your excitement will be contagious! This is also a perfect chance to declutter and decide what should be moved and what shouldn't. Help your child pack a special box that will travel with them. For the young child, this box might contain their favorite storybook, stuffed animal, and blanket. For the older child, it might contain their Game Boy with their favorite games, extra batteries, a chapter book, and their music. As a fringe benefit, the time that you spend with your child will provide more opportunities to talk about how they are feeling.

As the moving date nears, make sure your child has ample opportunities to say goodbye. Give your child a disposable camera and let them take pictures of friends, their school, and activities in which they are involved. Encourage them to take pictures of their bedroom, their house, and anything else they are worried that they might forget. Develop the pictures, slide them into a photo album and you will have created a memorable book for your child to enjoy for years to come. Throw a good bye party for your child. Have an address book at the party to collect addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. Assure your child that you will help them to stay in contact with their friends.

Lastly when preparing your child to move, understand that the adjustment will take time. It's going to take time for you as well. Settling into a new home, neighborhood, school, and activities can be challenging. Be patient and available to your child. Acknowledge their feelings and help them to look upon the move as the start of a wonderful new adventure. For more information about moving, visit: www.OrangeCountyResourceGuide.com