

Tips for Moving with Kids

By Movers Directory.com



Different children may react to moving in different ways. Some kids may become depressed and may keep crying for days because they feel they are in an alien climate. The key to making the move a success with kids is to GET THEM INVOLVED! Be upbeat from the start, and talk to your children as much as possible. Make them come up with ideas on how to make moving better and easier. Make your kids feel they are important members of the family moving team!

Worried About How Your Children Will React to Moving? Here Are Some Helpful Moving Tips When Moving With Kids:

- **Do not wait to inform your children about moving. Tell your kids about the move as soon as possible!** It is pretty natural to assume that the less time kids have to think about moving, the easier it will be for your children. However, experts say it is actually the opposite. Kids need time to get used to the idea of moving. Don't put off telling them about moving.
- **Welcome your children's questions about moving.** Open lines of communication will go a long way toward helping your children feel comfortable with moving. And it's okay even if you can't answer all their questions right now. Your kid's questions can give you an idea of how they're feeling about moving — whether they're excited or uneasy. Some questions may also offer an ideal way to get them involved in the moving process, such as suggesting they get online to locate nearby libraries or parks.
- **Be positive and upbeat about the move.** Your attitude about the move will influence your children's attitude as well. If you dread moving, then the move will seem dreadful to them too. Be enthusiastic, upbeat, and positive about the new experiences and opportunities in store, and your children will be more likely to feel the same way.
- **Let your children know they can help with the move.** This is a good time to emphasize that the move is a family event and that everyone will be part of the planning, packing, and perhaps even choosing the new home. Start your kids on thinking of things they can do and how to get ready for the move. Assure your kids that their contributions, however small, will be valued and greatly appreciated.



Before the Move

Most children have some semblances of a "natural explorer" or an adventurous, curious side to them. You should appeal to that explorer/adventurous side when telling kids that the family is moving. This way, you'll help them view the move as an experience that can lead to exciting discoveries.

Telling Younger Children about a Move

Here you'll find helpful moving advice for telling your younger children (up to age 9) about the planned move. Remember that children have different concerns about moving at different ages. For young children and preschoolers, family is the center of their lives. Younger children will be curious about moving, and the concerns they may have such as being left behind and getting lost. It's important that parents pay attention to those concerns and not treat them as trivial.

1. Explain where you are moving and why you are moving. Be short and to the point when trying to explain the move to younger children. Use words they can understand such as, "Daddy got a promotion at work and we're moving to where his new office will be", or "Since your grandfather got sick, Grandma needs our help. We're moving to be closer to them", or also "We need a much bigger house and we've found a place that has what we all need."

2. Highlight benefits of moving that your kids can understand. For example, if you say that that you're moving to another town because the schools there are better, may likely not have much meaning to younger children. However, pointing out that the new schools will have more activities your child will enjoy, such as more sports programs if your child likes sports or a band if your child plays an instrument (or wants to), are reasons that your kids can comprehend and look forward to.

3. Use maps and pictures as illustration to make the move more concrete. If your children can understand maps, have one that shows your new community where you are moving to. Together, locate where you will be living and places of interest around your new place. If you are moving far, have a map that shows where you are now and where you're moving. Help them trace the distance and even plot out a route you might take when moving from here to there. If possible, have photographs of the community and your new home that your kids can appreciate.

4. Reassure them that their life won't change dramatically. Do point out the things that you know will be basically the same in their new home and community, such as having a backyard to play in and going to school. Explain that pets and favorite toys or belongings will go with them. If there are lessons or other activities your kids enjoy now, assure them that you'll find new instructors or similar programs for them in your new community.

Before the Move: What Emotions to Expect From Younger Children

Moving to a new place can greatly affect children's behavior and emotions. Moving represents change, which creates issues for every age. Younger children need routine, so throughout the moving period, aim to keep your child's schedules and routine normal. Even as familiar surroundings change into boxes galore, if breakfast can still start with cereal in a favorite bowl and bedtime is still a ritual of tooth-brushing and bed time stories, your young kids will cope better than you might expect.

Younger kids in the family are likely to be the most eager members of the moving team. You'll see more positive emotions and behavior associated with moving from younger kids. They will also look forward to the chance to assist you any way they can. Let your kids help by assigning tasks you know they can handle. Remember that moving will trigger anxiety too, so consider these points:

Preschoolers, toddlers, and young children in general are egocentric. When you show stress, they may think it is something they did. Be mindful of your emotions and reactions around them, and give them extra reassurance.

Even in their excitement, young children will feel sadness at leaving familiar people, places and activities. Help your kids with concrete ways to make the "old place to the new place" transition. Follow our moving tips below to help your younger children cope with the move.

Keep note that the unknown increases anxiety. Sharing and reading children's picture books about moving is a great way to prepare younger kids for what's ahead and voice the range of feelings they may have.

Getting Ready: "Before the Move" Moving Tips for Younger Children

- **Make a list of all the Questions you have about moving.** What do you want to know about the new place to where you'll be moving?
- **Create an Address Book.** Who are your best friends, the ones you want to stay in touch with after you move? Make a list and get each one's phone number, home address, and e-mail address.
- **Say your Goodbyes.** Who do you want to say goodbye to before you leave? Your neighbor? Your babysitter? Your dentist? Make a list of all the people you want to say your farewells to, and some of these people you can call or e-mail, or some you can give a farewell hug.
- **Make a last visit to your favorite places.** Think of your favorite places (like the park or the library or the candy shop) that you want to visit one more time before you move away. If it's a long list, choose your top three favorite places and make. Talk to your parent(s) about when you can go.
- **Plan your new bedroom.** Draw a floor plan for a really cool bedroom in your new home. Think about the colors you want, the decorations, where to put your bed and toys.

Telling Teens & Pre-Teens about a Move

Some pre-teens and teenagers will be excited at the idea of moving and your news will be met with squeals of delight. However, if you suspect that won't be the case with your teenager, don't worry -- you're not alone.

Moving is often hardest on young adolescents and teenage children because as you well know that at this age, friends are vitally important. Moving means giving up these friendships and having to form new ones. And since fitting in with peers is of prime concern for your pre-teen or teen, he or she may worry about what kids are like where they're moving and who will be their new friends.

Whether you're expecting delight and excitement or disdain and resistance, here is a moving guide on breaking the news to older children.

1. Telling your teen or pre-teen IMMEDIATELY is very important. Keeping a move from your teen or pre-teen is likely to heighten emotions between you, as they may feel betrayed — that you were hiding an important secret from them. Your teenager will also need time to get used to the idea of moving, to plan and also to grieve at leaving their friends.

2. Do some homework so you can "sell" the new community to your teen. Get ready to present the benefits of moving that your teens will agree are positives for them. Perhaps things such as they'll finally get their own bedroom, or a basketball court in the big yard, or you're moving to a place with more public transportation, making it easier for them to get around on their own independently.

Look for a link to a talent or interest your teen has that can be explored more fully in this new community. Show them that the move will have plenty of opportunities for them personally.

3. Be straightforward about why you are moving to a new place. Older children are better able to grasp the bigger issues of why the move is happening -- even if they seem stubborn and don't want to understand. You can explain why a promotion at Daddy's work can't be turned down and can benefit the whole family, or why elderly grandparents need the family nearby. Be open to having a discussion to state your reasoning, such as when your teen asks why Grandma can't just move closer to you. Remember the importance of keeping open lines of communication. Your responses like "Because I said so" often won't help ease the transition.

4. Share what will happen next with your teenager. Share with them the expected timetable and how the move will work, such as if one parent will move first and the rest of the family will follow later. Explain where you are in terms of finding a new home and how your teen can be involved in the moving process. Be sure to assure your teen that his or her ideas are welcome and appreciated, even if you can't always act on them, and that their opinions and feelings are always respected. Make sure you live up to your word!

Before the Move: What Emotions to Expect From Teens and Pre-Teens

Moving usually tends to be toughest for pre-teens and teens. The difficulty that arises during moving around your teen doesn't mean that your teenager is purposely trying to make your life miserable. There are real developmental issues at work.

At this age, your teenager is learning how to form more long-term (and perhaps even romantic ones) relationships. The decision to move may be seen as "undoing" the hard work your teenager has put in (unconscious as it may be) to form these relationships. At a difficult stage when your older child is slowly inching outside the bounds of family and trying to form his or her own personal identity, moving is a powerful reminder that your pre-teen or teen is not yet the master of his or her own destiny. The older the child, the more these feelings, emotions, and frustrations are at play. Throughout the moving process, give your teenager space and time. Do be patient and try not to lecture or be defensive, as it may make things worse.

Your older children can be a big help to you with the move -- from planning, to packing, to gathering information and helping younger siblings by easing their anxieties. Assign your teen responsible tasks and show your gratefulness as they pitch in. This will surely encourage them to help you more.

Your teenager may try to talk you out of moving or may insist on staying behind to live with a relative or friend. Experts do recommend that if your teenager is a senior in high school and especially if you are moving mid-year, you may want to seriously investigate these alternatives. Otherwise, you'll need to be firm, state and restate that the family moves together and stays together.

Remember that the unknown increases anxiety. Together, find out as much as you can about the new community, new school, job possibilities if your teenager has one now, social activities or groups your child might join in your new place.

Your teen's worries about losing good friends that he or she has now can be very stressful. Depending on how far away you are moving, discuss with your older kids how they can stay in touch with best friends, such as weekends together or summer vacations together.

Kids this age need to know they are heard, understood, and respected. If you and your teen have trouble communicating, your child may need a chance to open up with a trusted adult, such as a counselor, relative, coach or neighbor. If this is the case between you and your child, help make this happen because you as a parent can learn and benefit from it too.

Getting Ready: "Before the Move" Moving Tips for Teens and Pre-Teens

Keep a Journal. Write your feelings, your worries, your expectations about the move on your "moving journal." Any notebook will do. Your journal can become your own personal memory book chronicling this big moment in your life -- moving from your old home to the new. Add journal entries all through the weeks and months to come. You can also attach pictures of friends and places in your current neighborhood, and leave room to add pictures of new friends and places to come.

Ask Questions. You're probably wondering about your new home, like how big is your bedroom, or will you have your own bathroom? Make a list of questions. If your parents are still looking for the new home, make a wish list of what you'd like your new house or apartment to have ... just don't expect to get everything you ask for!

Make Plans for your New Room. When you get the word on your new bedroom, get out your drawing tools to plan out your brand new space. Figure out the new furniture placement and what colors you may want, or new theme you want for your new bedroom. Designing a new bedroom is part of the fun of moving!

Research your new Community. Find information about your new town online. Do an Internet search for local sports teams, activities you can join, movie houses, job possibilities, stores, restaurants, places to visit— whatever you want to know!

Research your new School. While you're Web surfing, look up your new school. Chances are, it has a school Website. Get the lowdown on school teams, clubs, teachers, courses, and the school-year schedule.

Update your Address Book. You're moving - but that doesn't mean you'll never be in touch with your friends again! With today's technology, you can still IM your friends, send e-mails or text messages. Now is a good time to start collecting phone numbers, e-mails, screen names, addresses, birthdays— anything to help you stay in touch with the friends you want to keep!

Say your Goodbyes. How do you want to say farewell to your best friends? Perhaps with a going-away party? With gifts you make, or things of yours that you give to special friends as keepsakes? Think of other ideas and talk to your best friends about it too. Run your ideas by your parents, especially if you plan to throw a going-away party.

Some Helpful Moving Advice from Parents Who Have Been There

- Keep your kids in the loop on important move information.
- Find activities in the new community that build on your children's interests.
- Visit the new school when it's in session, so the building doesn't seem as cavernous and your kids see students who are like them.

- Volunteer at school to be a reassuring presence for younger children.
- Visit the new community and the school before you move.
- If it feels right, let an older teen stay behind to finish school.
- Use after-school activities to help kids make friends.
- Use contacts in the old community to help you find similar programs in the new one.
- Allow an extra week for packing.
- With toddlers, keep things and routines familiar.
- Set up a toddler's new room similar to the old one.
- If appropriate, confine a cat to one room in the new home to help it adjust.

During the Move

Moving Tips & Activities to Keep the Family Sane on Moving Day

It's moving day, and it's time to get your team together for the move! Read our moving tips for kids below to help your children feel very much a part of the moving process as they check off their own moving "to-do" lists. You'll find helpful moving advice and useful moving tips to keep the kids focused (and happy) while doing their fair share of the packing and moving chores.

There's a lot for children to do from the moment they learn about the move, so be sure to get them involved!

Packing Up and Moving Day

Saying farewell to favorite people and places -- even to the old home itself -- is important for young children. Preschoolers and toddlers may need help in understanding that their same friends and neighbors will not be in the new place.

The actual process of packing up and putting things away in boxes may be emotionally trying for preschoolers, as they see familiar and favorite objects disappear into boxes. Try to pack your preschoolers' belongings as late in the moving schedule as possible, and reassure them that their belongings will be going to the new house.

If you have pets, remember that moving is tough on them too. For a young child who's attached to the family dog, cat or bird, the pet's discomfort can heighten the child's anxiety. Talk to and share with your young child how the family pet may react to lessen unhappy surprises.

For older children, saying goodbye to friends will also be very important when come times for moving day. Your teen or pre-teen might want to host a going-away party for friends or plan a series of overnights with his or her best buds.

Although there is plenty to be done that you need your pre-teen's or teen's help with, but remember to be understanding of his or her needs too.

Moving Day Checklist for Younger Children

- Packing Time! Time to Sort Your Stuff!

Moving is a good reason to get rid of things you don't want anymore, which will also make room for new things you might get in the future! Go through your all toys and games and group them into three piles:

First Pile: Things you want to take with you to the new home.

Second Pile: Things to toss out (broken toys and games with missing pieces).

Third Pile: Things you don't want but could be given away to other kids.

- Ask: "What Else"!

Ask your parents what else you can do to help with all the sorting and packing that needs to be done. They will appreciate your help!

- Mark Your Stuff as "Yours"!

Design your own personal "seal" for marking your boxes as YOUR property! As your belongings are packed, draw your "seal" on the outside of each box. Be creative! You can create your own work of art to mark your belongings.

- Get Ready for Your First Night!

Your first night in your new home is very special. Be sure to have your favorite pajamas, your trust blanket or stuffed toy, or your favorite book packed away in your suitcase or backpack. This will be your very own piece that you'll personally be in charge of to take with you to your new place to get ready for your first night in your new home!

- Don't Forget to Bring Some Entertainment!

Don't forget to take some things for you to do on the airplane or in the car on the way to the new home, such as books, video games, action figures, or crayons and paper.

Moving Day Checklist for Teens & Pre-Teens

- Help Out During the Move

Now is a great time to show your parents how mature you are and that you can handle responsibilities. Packing is certainly a lot of work and your parents can use your help. You may have younger siblings who are anxious about the move and could use your big brother/big sister advice and comfort. Think of things you can do to help out with moving, including spending more time with your siblings and taking charge of them on "Moving Day". Volunteer your own ideas and help your parents develop and execute a packing and moving plan.

- Ask: "What Else"!

What else can you do to help your family with all the sorting and packing that needs to be done? Ask your parents and then put a checkmark here for each task you complete. The more you have and get to check off, the prouder you should be of yourself! You can also sort through your stuff and determine which are:

- Things you want to take with you to the new home.
- Things you don't want and could be given away to other kids.
- Things to toss out.

Moving Day Checklist for Younger Children

- Mark Your Stuff as "Yours"!

Design your own personal "seal" for marking your boxes as YOUR property! As your belongings are packed, draw your "seal" on the outside of each box. This will make it easy to find your box with your belongings when it comes time to unpack them in your new home.

- Strategic Packing

Come up with a plan for packing up your own stuff. Pack the stuff first which you can do the longest without. What things can you part with for only a short while? Pack those last! Label your boxes carefully so you know what's inside them when it's time to unpack.

- Get Ready for Your First Night!

You certainly don't want to have to unpack the minute you arrive at your new home, so set aside things for your first night and morning, or even a few days. Pack up these "must-haves" to take with you in a suitcase or backpack -- things such as your toothbrush, favorite clothing, shoes, CDs, photos of friends, etc. Include (within reason) anything you can't live without!

- Don't Forget to Bring Some Entertainment!

If your family is driving or flying a distance to the new home, pack your "survival kit" to help you with the travel: magazines, video games, music CDs and CD player, movies and a portable DVD, snacks -- whatever you need to survive hours in the car or in the air!

After The Move

Moving Advice: Settling In

You're done with closing and have moved into your new home, but you're not finished -- in fact, your new life is just beginning! There's more to do on the family front to make your house truly a home.

After the tiring and seemingly never ending chores of planning, sorting, and packing, this is the fun part of family moving -- settling into your new home! It's when the adventure begins for your kids in their new home and new neighborhood, as they discover all kinds of wonderful surprises in their new place. Here are some useful moving in / settling in tips for moving kids into the new home, making new friends, as well as other important ways to ensure a happily-ever-after ending to your family's move.

After the move, be prepared to re-teach household rules to young children and toddlers in the new home, like not touching what is hot.

More than ever, monitor your kids' moods after the move. Children can have trouble sleeping in an unfamiliar room after a move, or they can be teary or cranky. When kids had originally seemed excited about moving, the sudden change in attitude after having moved in can be alarming. However, this is not unusual. Give your children time and be sensitive to their emotions. It won't be long before they settle in for good, and they're sure to make exciting surprises and new friends that will have them smiling once again!

Prolonged upset or moodiness after a move shouldn't be ignored. Unusual problems with schoolwork or dealing with peers, or changes in sleeping/eating patterns that don't get better are possible signs that your child may need extra support in adjusting to the move.

10 Tips to Settling in Your Home Sweet Home

1) Make a positive goodbye to your old home and community.

One of the best tips for family moving is letting go and moving forward to your new life on a positive note. Taking-leave rituals will help provide a sense of closure in your old home, which will make the transition easier for your kids when settling into the new home and new community. Here are some "saying farewell" ideas:

- A few weeks before you move, hold an informal get-together for close friends and neighbors to say farewell.
- As a family, make a point of visiting favorite restaurants and other special places one more time before you leave.
- When everything's been packed away and the old house is empty, take a room-by-room "memory walk" with your children. Recall birthday parties in the dining room, holiday events in the living room, stories of bringing the children home as babies --the kinds of memories every family has. Take a last stroll around the outside too.
- Compare how the house feels empty to how it felt with all your belongings there. Doing this, your children will get the idea that what really makes a home is the family and your personal things – framed pictures, furniture, dishes, books, and toys.

2) Plan a family welcoming ritual for your new home.

Welcome rituals can be anything that will have meaning for your children and you. Here are some ideas for your "new home welcome rituals":

- If the children are seeing the house for the first time, do a walk-through together to "meet" your new home before your things fill the rooms.
- Plant a tree or bush together outside as a symbol that this is your home now. If it's wintertime, plant something in a pot inside that you can transplant in the spring.
- Gather together to hang a family photograph or find the perfect spot for an object that is special to your family. If you've always had a fountain, bird feeder, or a swing in the backyard, make a special event of putting the new one up in this home together.

3) Have everyone's "basic survival necessities" where you can find them immediately and easily in the new home.

These "survival necessities" may be baby's "blankie", favorite pajamas for your toddler, essential music CD or comfy sweatshirt for your teen, and the coffee pot for you. Pack a suitcase or box with "must haves" for each family member -- belongings that would cause crankiness, crying, or raise blood pressure if they went missing for too long. Your first few days in your new home, especially that first night and morning, will be so much more pleasant for the family when everyone has the familiar stuff that make them comfortable.

4) Re-establish regular family routines, such as mealtimes and bedtimes, right away.

When moving, there's a certain amount of disruption to regular schedules that you simply can't avoid. But once you've moved in, aim to get back on track with your normal family routines as quickly as possible. This will help younger children, in particular, who need routines and more consistency. This also sends the important message to all members that you are the same family, just in a new setting. The old rules, routines and rituals still apply no matter where you're at.

5) Be sure to prioritize the unpacking process.

You certainly didn't pack in a day, so don't try to unpack in one either. Make setting up the children's bedrooms your first priority to help get them comfortable. Put the kitchen, bathroom(s), family room and other high-use living spaces at the top of the list. Don't obsess over decorating or hanging pictures right away. Take your time to enjoy getting to know your new home and the wonderful discoveries you and your kids will make about it.

6) Allow the children some say in setting up their new bedrooms.

Their new bedroom is truly their own space in the new home, so let your kids claim it. Of course, your children's age will depend on how much control they have. At the least let them decide where their bed goes in the room. If there's a budget for new furnishings, let them help select the new rug or bedspread, or allow them to select a few bedroom decorations of their own such as removable wall stickers.

7) Help your kids feel comfortable in their new bedrooms.

Some kids have trouble sleeping in a new bedroom. It is unfamiliar to them and can make them feel anxious. Take the time to talk about how this bedroom is similar to the child's old room and also discuss how it's different. Pay special attention to bringing in furnishings and belongings that were in the old room to encourage a sense of familiarity. Bring up things about the old room that your child didn't like, such as weird shadows or rattling windows, and help your kid discover the good things about this new bedroom.

8) Familiarize yourselves with the new neighborhood.

This is especially important for comfort and safety. You want your children to know as quickly as possible the boundaries of where they can go and where they can't go beyond. Taking walks or driving around together as a family is the best way to uncover the exciting surprises that wait in the new neighborhood.

9) Help your family pets settle in.

Your children will feel more comfortable when they see that their family pets are doing okay. Cats do best when you confine them to one room in the new house. Give your pets opportunities to explore further, but don't push. As they feel more comfortable, they'll expand and explore their new territory. Keep dogs on a leash until they get to know the new neighborhood. In general, don't let cats or dogs roam around the new place immediately. The last way you want to meet the neighbors is through a door-to-door search for your little pooch or feline!

10) Remember to "make new friends but keep the old."

Play an active role in helping your children make new friends in your new community. However, do also support their need to hold onto their old friends. They will appreciate having you as their confidante for sharing their new experiences and discoveries.

Helping your kids meet new friends:

- With new colleagues from work or new families you meet, set up play dates for younger children to get to know each other.
- Find activities for your school-age children to join, such as sports teams, clubs, lessons and classes. Meeting children with the same interests as your child increases the odds of going beyond acquaintance to friend.
- Take the initiative and introduce yourself to the neighbors. Your children's first new friends may literally be living next door. A meet-and-greet can help get those new friendships get underway.

Staying in touch with old friends:

- Pre-paid phone cards can keep long distance calls to old friends from breaking your budget.
- Make plans for an upcoming visit with old friends -- whether in the new neighborhood or the old.