

## Plant a Flag

---

You've made it...your new home! Feeling freaked out? Totally normal. But there are lots of things you can do right away to help everyone relax:

- **Plant your flag.** In the age of exploration and colonization, people arriving in a new place would plant their nation's flag. Why not make a flag for your family, and "claim" your new home as soon as you arrive? If an actual flag isn't your style, try making a proclamation on the doorstep, predicting good things to come for you and your family.
- **Have a welcoming meal.** What better way to "break in" a new home than a first meal? Before you get down to the dirty work of unpacking boxes and putting everything in its place, suggest that your family order out to celebrate. Even if the dishes and kitchen table are still on the truck, you can eat right from the bags or boxes, sitting on the living room floor!
- **Personalize your space.** Whether you've got a room to yourself or you're sharing, have some fun making a space that says something about you. Your space might be bigger, smaller, differently shaped, or a different color than your old room, but you can still make it your own. Put up pictures and posters, decorating in your unique style, and filling it with the things that make you comfortable.
- **Make discovery missions.** If it's safe to do so and you get the okay, walk or bike around your new neighborhood to get the lay of the land. You might even want to write down the locations of stores, restaurants, playgrounds, and other useful places. If you can't go by yourself, go for walks or drives with a parent and start making a mental map of your new territory, or volunteer to go along on family errands.
- **Learn to accept differences.** You might find yourself saying or thinking, "Ugh, I liked our old supermarket better," or "The movie theater doesn't get the good flicks right away!" It may be hard, but try to avoid making negative comparisons between the old and the new. Find alternatives to the things you don't like, or just concentrate on what you DO like.