

## Transition Tips

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- \*Involve the children from the beginning. Discuss the move, its pros and cons.
- \*Give them something concrete to look forward to. For example, two children who have shared a room may be allowed separate bedrooms. It might help to let them pick out the new drapes, rugs, or bedspreads.
- \*Saying goodbye to friends is always painful. Let the children preserve ties with their old friends as long as they need to through telephone conversations, emails and exchanges of visits.
- \*Try to keep family schedules constant as much as possible. Find ways to reassure your child that your love will not change, that child will always be as important to you as now.
- \*Be sensitive to the effects of disruption. Realize, for example, how alarming it may be for a three-year-old to come home from nursery school to find the bedroom full of packing boxes. Although it is more convenient to have the child out from under foot during actual packing operations, consider letting him/her stay just long enough to see what is going on. A few days in advance, encourage the child to help you pack a few boxes of special toys.
- \*Expect the child to need time to adjust. Be willing to let the child regress, keep a light on at night, take a variety of stuffed toys to bed.
- \*Put up a map. Try to find out as much as you can about the place you are going, its history, main attractions, climate, and geography. Let the children help you research these facts. Familiarity in this instance helps breed security.
- \*Let the children know what to expect, both good and bad. If partings from pets, for example, will be required, tell the children rather than having the animal simply disappear one morning. Let them help find it a home and meet the people who will care for it.
- \*Allow the child the dignity of his grief at parting from the pets and from friends. It does not help to say, "Oh, you'll forget Roger in two weeks." It is acceptable to talk about what kinds of new friends he/she may encounter or about how he first met his/her current buddy after initial loneliness, but don't deny him the grief.
- \*Among your "carry-ons" or express shipment, include familiar belongings and perhaps a scrapbook or pictures of the old home surroundings to remind your child of how things were and will be again.
- \*Make sure the children first hear about the move from you. Allow them to ask questions and voice their concerns. Remind them of their past experiences if they've moved before. Share stories about how you felt when you were a child and had to move to a new house.
- \*Take time for good-byes. Children need a chance to tell their friends they will miss them and to exchange personal mementos.
- \*Encourage older children to make a scrapbook with photos of friends and favorite places, a flower from the garden, and autographs of friends. Give a few small packing boxes to younger children so they can "act out" moving.
- \*Keep them busy. Allow children to help pack and tag items for 're-mates'. Never throw away their possessions before discussing it because kids form unpredictable attachments during times of change.

- \* Put off as much as possible in the first week after arrival to focus on getting the kids adjusted. Enroll them in activities, have fun and draw maps of the neighborhood and unwind.
- \* Use the dinner table to exchange feelings and new experiences. Each member might tell an exciting discovery of the day.
- \* Keep your sense of humor intact. A little laughter goes a long way in easing the transition.
- \* Supply your child with stamped notepaper to write to friends.
- \* Ask if your moving company has a kit for children
- \* Listen to your children! Encourage them to talk to you about how they feel. After your move, join a church group, club or other organization. Find out about Scouts or Brownies, sports for your child. See about continuing any music, karate, tae-kwan-do, gymnastics, ballet, tennis, or other lessons.
- \* And..... good luck!

Based on information from the ASIJ Elementary Guidance webpage.