

Want to Help Your Kids Cope With a Move?



8 Ways to Gentle Them to Feeling at Home

Relocations are fairly common. In fact, 14 percent of Americans move each year. Still the process can be filled with anxiety for parents and their kids. Families inevitably experience a sense of loss and sadness at leaving their familiar homes, neighborhoods, and communities. And, as you might expect, it's not uncommon for mom and dad, but especially the kids, to experience apprehension about settling in to a new place, and, in the case of kids, a new school.

That's why in addition to the logistical preparations for a move, extra care should be taken for the delicate emotions of everyone in the family. Kids top that list. Use these pointers so your kids will feel at home:

1 PREPARE THEM

Experts say how you handle the time leading up to the move has a big impact on how easily your kids adapt. Focus on things that will be the same: e.g., furniture, clothes and, most importantly, their toys. Don't emphasize what will be different.

2 UNDERSTAND THEIR FEAR

Even if your children are excited about the move, they may still be anxious, especially if they are moving away from someone they love. All children accept things at their own pace. Most experts estimate that it takes at least six months for kids to fully acclimate to their new lives. Understand that their adjustment may take some time.

3 SET THE RIGHT EXAMPLE

Your kids look to you and model your behavior. It's important for you to stay positive, otherwise your negativity will rub off on them. Watch what you say about your new home or town. Highlight all the good things. It's likely your kids will see these points as positive, too.

4 KEEP FAMILIAR ROUTINES

Create a sense of the familiar. Maintain as many of your old routines as possible. Do this as frequently as you can. It also makes sense to help them find clubs or teams in your new location that resemble the activities that they liked or in which they excelled where they used to live.

5 LET THEM DECIDE

Let your children make some decisions. Choices about the layout and look of their rooms is one good area where they can weigh in. If shopping for new bedding and/or window treatments, let them have a say. Any opportunity for them to have a choice and an opinion helps to give them a sense of control during an otherwise confusing time.



6 GET TO KNOW NEIGHBORS

Throw a housewarming party or reach out to your Facebook friends and see if your connections are also linked to someone who will be your new neighbor. Volunteer to be a room parent or work the concession stand at the little league field. Arrive a little early to events as well as school. This gives you the opportunity to start conversations, make new friends and/or meet other **parents**.

7 PRACTICE SOCIAL SKILLS

Teach your kids how to start a conversation and help them to practice so it becomes second nature. If other kids are playing soccer, encourage your youngster to try out or join a team. Let them know that wherever they go they will make friends. Remind them of times in the past when they easily made friends. It will give them confidence. Still, be realistic and let them know this may take a little time.

8 BE PATIENT

Above all, be patient. Being sad or upset is to be expected. Teach them healthy and sustainable coping mechanisms to deal with their emotions and feelings. And, remember nothing worth happening happens overnight. Be patient and sooner or later, your kids—and you, too—will feel at home.