



MOVING WITH KIDS:

7 steps

TO SMOOTH THE
TRANSITION





Moving with kids: **7 steps to smooth the transition**

Moving can be dramatic, some would even say traumatic, and it only gets more complicated when you have children. You can make life a lot easier for yourself – and your kids – if you remember they're likely feeling the effects of all this change even more acutely than you. To smooth the transition for your entire family (not to mention dialing back everyone's stress), try these tips from families who've been there.

STEP 01 Share the news

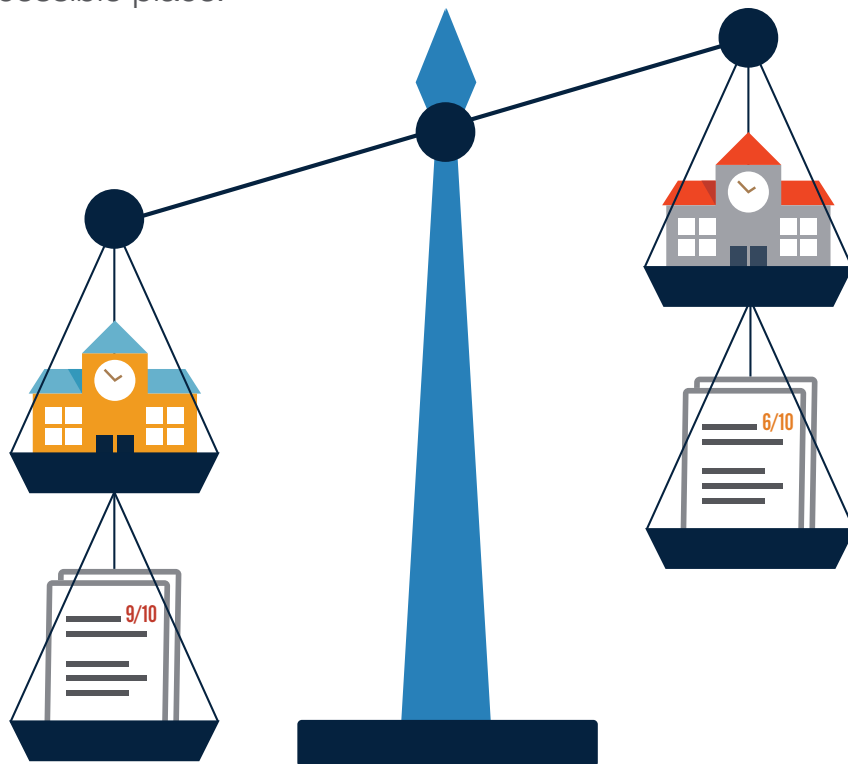
- As soon as you know the move is a go, get your children involved. The earlier the kids feel like they're part of the process, the better. Tell them what's happening — little kids may need the concept explained — and when. Remember your children's temperaments. Your social butterfly and your shrinking violet will react differently to changes. Ask them their opinions about things, such as what they would like in their new house, neighborhood, and school.
- As much as possible, stick to routines such as bedtime, mealtimes, homework rituals, chores — while packing and unpacking. Routine is comforting and safe for kids — and many adults.



STEP 02

Choose a new school

- Many parents prioritize choosing a school even before they choose a house, so they can pick the schools and school district that best match their needs. The best way to start to find a school from a distance is to go on [GreatSchools.org](https://www.GreatSchools.org) and look at ratings and reviews of schools in your future hometown.
- To be safe, pick a second and third choice, too. If your first choice school doesn't work out for any reason, you'll have a backup plan.
- Once you find the right school, you have to register your kids! You might need to provide documents, such as immunization records and transcripts. Check with your new school (and the backups) to see what they require. You may need to gather the records before leaving your old neighborhood or you may need to make sure the old school and new school are in contact and can transfer the right information. If you end up with the paperwork, be sure to pack it in a safe and accessible place!



STEP 03

Get to know your new place

- If your move isn't too far away, visit the new house with your children and do a walk-through. If it's long distance, show them pictures and talk about what you see — and what you know about the new house that they cannot see in the photos.
- If possible, let your children choose their rooms. Can you paint their room? Let them choose their colors. If your child's old enough, ask him to draw his new room to scale and arrange his furniture. Remind him to include a study space in his design.



STEP 04

Explore the area before you move

- Walk or drive around the neighborhood and show your child the route to school. Can't do this in person? Go online to explore your new area together. Look at a map of the new neighborhood to get familiar with street names, spot the nearest park, locate the local library, and see what else your new town has to offer.
- Take a tour of your children's new school and classrooms. If you can, arrange to meet the teacher and principal before the first day of school so your child will have a familiar adult face as an emotional security blanket. This is a good time to pick up a list of supplies students are expected to have. Take a mental note of your child's comfort level. Is one visit enough? If you have a few days before school starts, you may want to do a few trial visits to the new school. Doing this all from afar? There may be ways the Internet can bridge the gap. Could you do a video Skype call with the teacher or principal? Maybe the PTA or PTO president or a class parent will email you pictures of your child's new classmates and classroom.



STEP

05

Pack it all up

- It's a no-brainer to you, but your little ones may not realize what all the boxes are for. Explain that you aren't throwing their things away; young kids may need to be reassured that they'll be reunited with their belongings. This is not the time to throw away any of your children's things. Nor is it the time to switch out their furnishings. They may not have paid any attention to a toy in months, but if they see it at the old house, they likely expect to see it at the new house.
- Make a craft activity out of having your children decorate the boxes their things will be packed in. That way, their stuff will be easy to recognize.
- Think about the trip itself. If you're travelling more than an hour, pack a box or backpack with a favorite stuffy, a couple of books, and activities for each child to have in the car and immediately upon arrival.
- Tell the movers — whether they're hired hands or generous friends who've volunteered to help — that the kids' boxes should be the last loaded on the truck. That way they'll come off first and you can set the children's rooms up for some degree of comfort and regularity right away.



STEP 06

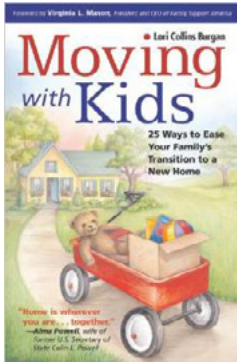
Say good-bye — and hello!

- It's incredibly important for children, from toddlers to teens, to say good-bye. Make an effort to help your child let go of the old by having a good-bye party, making a going-away gift, or spending time with favorite people before the move.
- In the new place, try getting to know your neighbors right away. Depending on the time of year you move, you might plan a holiday-themed afternoon open house with appetizers and desserts. This will help you get to know the parents, kids, and others in the neighborhood. These casual get-togethers create a natural opportunity for children — and parents — to make a friend or two. And again, this gives your child familiar faces when the setting changes to school.
- Get involved! Joining the local community center, religious or spiritual group, recreational sports leagues, and your school's PTO typically creates several opportunities to get to know people in your new area.



STEP 07 Read books to help kids cope with moving

FOR PARENTS

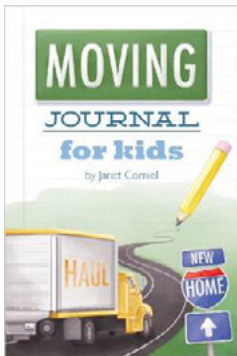


Moving with Kids: 25 Ways to Ease Your Family's Transition to a New Home

By Lori Collins Burgan

Whether you're taking your children across town, across the country, or overseas, you have to smooth their path. Drawing on the expertise of families who have relocated many times, this book provides practical advice to make the experience positive and to build family unity and children's confidence.

FOR PARENTS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOLERS, AND OLDER – PARENTS

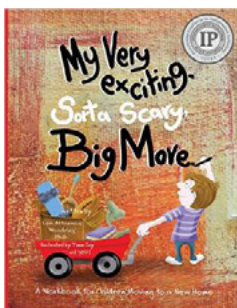


Moving Journal for Kids

By Janet Corniel

Moving is one of the most stressful life experiences for an adult, let alone a child. Janet Corniel developed an interactive journal-type manuscript to help children cope with their feelings of displacement, testing them first on her own sons. This includes checklists, questions, and space to write, plus tips for parents and kids. It's a tool that encourages communication between parents and children to help make a successful transition.

FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLERS



My Very Exciting, Sorta Scary, Big Move: A Workbook for Children Moving to a New Home

By Lori Attanasio Woodring Ph.D., illustrated by Timm Joy

My Very Exciting, Sorta Scary, Big Move walks kids step by step through the entire moving process, including understanding change, strategies for managing emotions, ways to say good-bye and stay in touch, preparing for a new adventure, tips for making new friends, and more. The charming illustrations and engaging activities allow children to take control of their feelings and experiences and become active participants in their exciting new adventure.

STEP 07 Read books to help kids cope with moving

FOR PARENTS AND PRESCHOOLERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

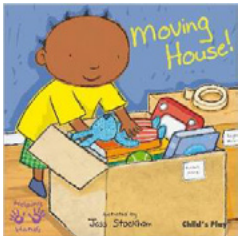


Big Ernie's New Home: A Story for Young Children Who Are Moving

By Teresa Martin and Whitney Martin

Big Ernie's New Home gently affirms the normal sadness, anger, and anxiety that young children feel after a move. And as Big Ernie gradually discovers familiar comforts and exciting adventures in his new home, young readers may be encouraged to do the same in theirs. In an extensive note to parents, Dr. Jane Annunziata discusses the feelings that young children face when moving and offers a wealth of suggestions for smoothing their adjustment.

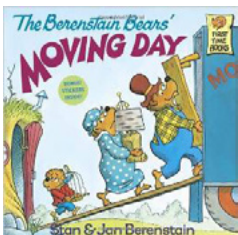
FOR PRESCHOOLERS



Moving House!

Illustrated By Jess Stockham

We're moving! Who's going to help with the packing? Helping with real tasks is a natural progression from pretend play and is a crucial stage in a child's development. Achieving a shared goal encourages a sense of responsibility and develops many skills useful in later life. Simple conversational text and lively illustrations are carefully designed to encourage further dialogue between reader and child.



The Berenstain Bears' Moving Day

By Stan and Jan Berenstain

This is the story of the Bear family's move to their tree house in Bear Country. Would Brother Bear like it? Would he find new friends? He wasn't sure until he got there.