

# PCSing with Kids? Here's How to Make the Transition as Easy as Possible:

Whether you're relocating across the country or across the street, moving can be an especially stressful experience when kids are involved. After all, any time you uproot children or teens from their familiar surroundings, things can get tough for the whole family. Fortunately, there are a number of things you can do – both before the move and after – to lessen their anxieties and alleviate their fears. To help you out, we've highlighted several ways to make the transition into the new home as seamless as possible for both you and your entire family. Good luck!

## Before the move

Prepare, prepare, prepare! When it comes to moving with kids, it's important to do as much as you can before the big move to ensure an easy relocation experience. Some tips:

- First things first: make sure to sit your children down and talk to them about the move. Listen to and answer any and all questions they may have. This will help put them at ease, and help them know what to expect. It may help to tell stories about your own moving experiences to ensure them that everything will be okay.

- Stay calm. Young children (and even babies) often pick up on their parents' emotions – especially when the parent is stressed or anxious. Do your best to remain calm and collected during the packing and moving process.
- Make packing fun. If you have small children, I recommend getting them boxes to play with while packing up their rooms. Teach them how to pack correctly and let them be a part of the process, overall.
- If your children are changing schools, you'll need to make sure you have their records transferred to the new school.
- Learn about the new neighborhood with your kids. Encourage your children to research the area you're moving to, so that it'll be more familiar to them once they move. Research sports teams, clubs, and other local groups to find out the best ways to immerse your family in the new town.
- Read books! One of the best ways to help a young child with their anxiety and sadness is by reading positive books about the moving process. You can find all sort of moving-related children's books on Amazon.com. A few good ones to try include: The Berenstain Bears' Moving Day, My Very Exciting, Sorta Scary, Big Move: A Workbook for Children Moving to a New Home, Big Ernie's New Home: A Story for Young Children Who Are Moving, and Tigger's Moving Day.

# Moving day

Packing for the moving day, itself, and for the first night in your new home, will automatically make the entire moving process with your children much easier. You'll want to make sure to pack an essentials moving day and "first night" bag for your kids. Here are a few suggestions for what to pack:

- Diapers and wipes
- Medications and a first-aid kit
- Clothing and pajamas
- Some sort of pack 'n play, high chair or bouncy seat to contain them for short periods of time
- Toys
- Breast pump and breast-feeding pillow
- Extra bags for dirty diapers and messy clothes
- Formula, juice and/or food
- Snacks, sippy cups and bottles
- Extra pacifiers
- Ipad with games
- Blanket
- Stroller and carrier
- Bath items
- Car seat

On the first night, work to create a calm and familiar space in your kids' new bedrooms. By making their beds, and surrounding them with familiar items, such as their favorite toys, stuffed animals and books, your kids will instantly feel more at home.

## Settling in

Getting comfortable in a new home and a new town takes time for both adults and children. Here are a few ways to ease your kids into their new environment:

- First, introduce your kids to the house by giving them a tour and letting them explore on their own. Make sure to point out unique, fun areas such as hidden doors or stairwells, great backyard trees for climbing, and more.
- If your kids want to help unpack, let them! By all means, if little Suzy starts unpacking her own bedroom boxes, and insists on placing her bookshelf in a certain place in the room – why not let her? Let your kids enjoy the new home and the unpacking process.
- If your kids are old enough, let them pick out the paint color for their room – and possibly help you with the painting itself.
- Consistency is key. If you have a baby or a young child, it's especially important to keep their routines (i.e. meals, play times, nap times,

activities, etc.) as consistent and normal as possible. This will help keep your kids feeling secure and you feeling sane.

- Stay positive. If you stay positive and upbeat about your new home. Your kids will too.
- Set up a playground in the backyard, and make sure to spend time with your children outside in your new yard.
- Meet the neighbors! Find out if there are other kids in the neighborhood around the same age as yours. Once your children find playmates, things won't be so lonely.