



One of the hardest parts of moving is preparing your children for the big change. No matter if you are moving across town or across the country, no matter if it's your first move or your 15th, moving to a new place is one of the most stressful events in a child's or teenager's life. But there are some ways you can help ease the transition to a new place and make the whole process a little less scary.



When you find out about an upcoming move, tell your children about it. Let them ask questions about their new home, community and school. Use the Internet—look up houses, schools and things to do in your new community. This can help your child get excited about the move. This is an especially good way to prepare your teen for the move—they can see their new school and the activities it offers. If they are an avid soccer player, find some community leagues or school teams they can join.

Whether your child is four or 14, saying goodbye to friends is never easy. Make or buy your child an address book to record all their friend's contact information—including e-mail. Help them take pictures of their friends for a scrapbook you can help them make once things settle down again.

Ask your children to make a list of things they'd like to do or see before you leave. Then, try to do as many of the things as are feasible. Also have them make a list of some things they'd like to do once you arrive at your new home—there may be a zoo or an amusement park nearby. Plan to take a break from moving in to your new home to do one or two of those things—you could all probably use the break by then!



Help children and teens go through their stuff before the packers get there. Put the toys they no longer play with and the clothes they've outgrown into a big box to donate to a charity.

Children want to be involved, but don't always know what they can do to help. So much of moving is "grown-up stuff," but there are many things you can let your child do that will be helpful to you, as well as helping them to feel they are a part of the move. Maybe your older children could watch your younger ones while the



packers are there, or maybe they could run to the store or get lunch for everyone on those days you have to be at home (like when the packers or movers are there). Even younger children can get into the action by picking out which movies and books to take with you on the trip.

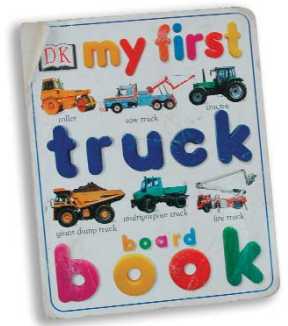
Many young children worry that they will be leaving all their "stuff" behind in a move—reassure them that all the important things will be going with you, and will just be in a different house. And make sure to keep any special toys or comfort objects in a separate closet or room the packers and movers are instructed not to touch—finding out that your daughter's blanket she has to have to go to sleep is now packed away in one of 847 boxes would not be good.



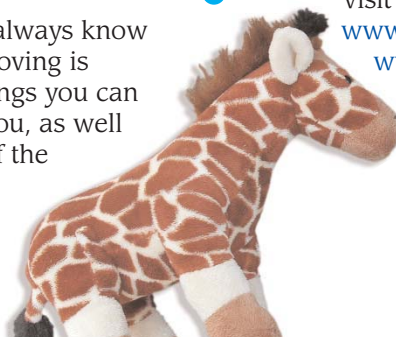
On the day you leave, be prepared for your child to be emotional (you probably will be, too), so pack a little

extra patience all around. Stock up on their favorite snacks and movies (this is when a portable DVD player or game system would be ideal), and say goodbye to your old home. If you are driving, have your children follow your progress on a map. Do take the time, if you can, to stop and see some silly things along the way—like the "World's Biggest Ball of String"—if your children are so inclined.

And finally, talk about the things you'd like to do in your new community and everything that will be available for your child to do there. Create some excitement about your arrival, and the trip will be more fun than work (well, at least where your children are concerned).



For more information and tips on moving with children, visit www.defenselink.mil/mtom/k2.htm www.militarystudent.org www.myarmylifetoo.org

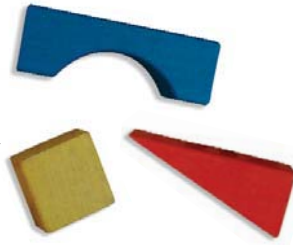


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Helpful Moving Tips - Moving With Infants and Young Children

While the packing and unpacking are in progress:

- Have a sitter or close friend attend to the infants or younger children.
- Avoid having young children under foot on moving day.
- Be sure to keep the favorite blanket and a few toys separated to take with you.



For infants:

- Keep baby food and bottles in your own carry-on or handy in the car.
- You may need baby towels, an extra blanket, clothes, other food, some toys, etc.
- Be sure to take an ample supply of bottles and diapers to keep the baby comfortable.
- Make sure temperature is neither too hot nor too cold.
- Make sure infant has plenty of room to sleep.
- Check infant and child seats to be sure that they are appropriate for the size of the child.

For toddlers:

- Take enough toys, books and games to keep toddlers happy and entertained.
- DVDs/CDs/tape players with “read me a book” tapes or discs can be very helpful.
- Have healthy snacks readily available.

Care, feeding, and resting:

- Keep babies and little children on a schedule that approximates their usual eating, nap and bedtime schedule.
- Be sure that they get balanced meals and enough rest.
- Keep children moving. Exercise is important. When you stop at a rest area, for example, if your kids are old enough, have them run around the greenway for 10-15 minutes. It will save you some headaches down the road.
- Choose mealtime places with special accommodations for children to run and play. Try to find hotels with swimming pools and playrooms and restaurants that cater to children.

Include your children in your plans for the new area:

- For toddlers, show them pictures of their new home.
- Teach them to say the name of their new town and some interesting facts such as there’s a children’s museum, or a zoo.

- Allow the child to select 1 or 2 toys, stuffed animals, books, etc. that he/she especially likes.

Help them fit in:

- Young toddlers feel more at home if they have some playmates.
- Help them to find children of their own age in the neighborhood.
- Make use of the child development programs and resources on your installation. They can advise on “child-friendly” places, playgroups, and childcare and supply information to help children adjust. ●

Source: www.myarmylifetoo.org