



Celebrity
INTERNATIONAL MOVERS S.A.



Child Preparation Guide

How to prepare your child for
this emotional transition.

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On behalf of myself and the Celebrity International Movers team I would like to thank you for trusting Celebrity with your next move.

Whether you're moving across town or across the country, moving is always a trying time. Some moves can have positive motivation, like job promotion, while others happen amidst a dramatic change, such as divorce or loss of employment. Whatever the reason, relocating can be challenging for everyone but especially tough on the younger members of your family. This transition may cause feelings of insecurity, resentment and fear.

So to ensure your kids feel like they're involved and part of this big life-changing event and to minimize these negative emotions we have prepared this guide to give you a helping hand. Try following these simple tips and tricks in preparing your kids and things should go that little bit smoother for everyone.

Once again we thank you for trusting us and hope that our guide will help make this transition easier on both you and your family!



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10 SIMPLE STEPS FOR MAKING YOUR MOVE CHILD'S PLAY

1. Break the news ASAP	4
2. Be open and keep them informed	4
3. Get them excited about the move.....	5
4. Make packing fun and keep them involved.....	6
5. Help them plan their goodbyes	7
6. Have a going away party	7
7. Keep routines and rules	8
8. Make the new house seem familiar	8
9. Help them enter the new community	9
10. Keep it positive!	10
Special Tips.....	11
Dealing With Emotions	11
Moving With Toddlers and Preschoolers.....	11
Moving With School-Age Kids.....	12
Moving With Teens.....	12

1. Break the news ASAP

Many kids thrive on familiarity and routine. So if possible, while you consider a move, weigh the benefits of that change against the comfort that established surroundings, school, and social life give your kids. Try touching base with them by seeing how they would feel about moving in theory. If your family has recently dealt with a major life change, such as divorce or death, you may want to postpone a move, to give kids time to adjust.

The decision to move may be out of your hands, perhaps due to a job transfer or financial issues. In this instance speak with your child as soon as you know that your upcoming move is certain. While it's natural to assume that keeping the news from your child will reduce his window of worry, the reality is that children, like all of us, need time to adjust to and process weighty information.

Your child will likely pick up on a change in your attitude and behaviour anyway, so it's better to be straightforward. "Kids can sense when you're keeping a secret," explains Marie Hartwell-Walker, Ed.D., (licensed psychologist and family counsellor in Massachusetts). "If you keep your child in the dark, what he'll imagine is happening may be worse than the reality".

2. Be open and keep them informed

No matter what the circumstances, the most important way to prepare kids to move is to talk about it.

First, make sure your children know that they can ask you any question and you'll give them an honest answer. Most kids want to know about their new school, neighbourhood, sport teams and city. However they may ask other more abstract questions like "How hard is it to make friends?". Answer questions completely and truthfully, and be receptive to both positive and negative reactions. Even if the move means an improvement in family life, kids don't always understand that and may be focused on the frightening aspects of the change.

The decision to move is a big one so it needs explaining. Whether it's across town or across the country, because of a job transfer or just because you're moving into a bigger house/better neighbourhood, your kids deserve an explanation. If you explain how the move will improve your family life, it will take the focus off the negative or frightening aspects for your children. Allow them to make a list of their concerns or questions and answer them as thoroughly and honestly as you can.

Before you break the news:

- Come up with a plan so that you can answer questions they might ask.
- Try to determine which school they'll attend and the kinds of classes/activities it offers.
- Gather a collection of websites you can explore together to learn more about your new school and town, including nearby museums, parks, and playgrounds that your kids can look forward to visiting.
- Know the exact date of the move so you can begin to plan packing and saying goodbyes.

Once you're set, call a family meeting to explain the general steps of your move. You may want to ask your children to write down their questions as they think of them and then call a family

meeting to discuss each person's questions. Just set time aside and make sure everyone is home. Listen to the concerns that are presented and take them seriously by acknowledging them and discussing them. See if there is a solution to the concern. You don't have to come up with one immediately. Ask your children if they have a solution, or suggest that you all take the time to think about the concern and come up with a solution. Make sure that you follow up as promised. Family meetings are a great way to open up a dialogue between you and your children. And you can make it fun, too!

3. Get them excited about the move

Try and get the kids excited above the idea of moving. Give the following a try:

- If you're moving across town, try to plan a visit the new house and explore the new neighbourhood. Even if you can't go inside the new house, walk or drive by and show them which window will be theirs and where the swing set will go, etc.
- While visiting, try to engage in activities that your children enjoy and go to places they would go in their old area (playground, arcade, mall, etc.). Stroll down your new street (you might even meet some future friends on your tour) so you both start to get a sense of the neighbourhood.
- Encourage your children to identify 3 things they'd like to do in the new place and make plans to do at least one of them.
- Focus on the positive aspects of your new home and neighbourhood. Maybe the windows are bigger in the kitchen, so you'll have more sunlight at breakfast, or the local library is within walking distance.
- For distant moves, if a visit is possible then try to make a holiday of it. Include visiting nearby areas that may have fun things to do or be fun for a daytrip.
- If a trip is not possible then gather as much information as you can about the new home, city, and state (or country). Access the Internet to learn about the community. Learn where kids can participate in favourite activities. See if a relative, friend, or even a real-estate agent can take pictures of the new house and new school for your kids. You can also try Googling your address-to-be — you might be able to see a street-level view of the house (or even spot it from space).
- Post pictures of the new house and nearby landmarks in a place where your child can check them out frequently (on the fridge, for example, or on your laptop as he sits in your lap).
- Ask your children to decorate their new bedrooms. Before you move, they can pick out a paint colour, draw up a floor plan to arrange the furniture, and shop for new bedding and rugs.
- Provide your kids with a moving kit containing information about your new city or neighbourhood, pictures of your new house and other items to put them at ease about the move.

4. Make packing fun and keep them involved

Involving kids in the planning procedure as much as possible makes them feel like participants. This can make the change feel less like it's being forced on them. Give your children the power to make choices at appropriate moments. It will make them feel more secure as it provides a sense of control and lets them know that their thoughts and feelings are respected.

- Write the date you're moving on the family calendar, so your children are well aware of when it's happening.
- Write the date that you'll need to start packing.
- When packing up your child's toys and clothes, make sure they understand that you aren't throwing the items away.
- Ask them to help you choose which household items to keep and which to get rid of at a tag sale. Give each child a list of tasks to do, including sorting out their room. Try not to insist that they toss anything that they may be clinging to for the sake of familiarity.
- Put your children in charge of a special job. Perhaps responsible for helping a younger sibling pack or for labelling and colouring boxes.
- Show children how to properly pack and label a box, then make a "packing date" where both you and your children spend time sorting and packing. Children will find it easier to do these tasks if the entire family is also involved. Reward "packing dates" with pizza or movie nights.
- Let them help. Your little mover will be more than happy to put unbreakable items into boxes (she can throw in throw pillows) and stick coloured dots on boxes (use them to designate which room in the new house each box will go).
- Save their stuff for last. Don't pack up toys your kids play with often until a day or two before the family move. When you do start filling their boxes, assure them over and over that everything you put inside will come back out at the new house.
- Young children can stay with a babysitter on moving day, while older kids and teens can help pack the moving truck.
- Tell your children to make a special box just for moving day essentials. You can call it "Moving Survival Kit". It should include those essentials your child will need during the move. Encourage them to decorate the box to make it their own. The kit should include games and books to keep them busy on the road. Your child may also want to include their address book or photos of friends. Essentials such as toothbrushes, clothes, etc. can be packed in a suitcase. The survival kit should be all about fun!

Safety Tips:

- ***Keep dangerous materials out of your children's reach when you're not around.*** It's easy to get distracted when you're packing, but just make sure you keep an eye out for potential perils — a packing-tape dispenser has a sharp cutting edge, stacks of empty boxes can be easily toppled, and bubble wrap could be a choking hazard.
- ***Upon arriving in the new house do a safety check.*** The last thing you need when you're setting up a new house is to worry that your kids might get hurt. When packing up your childproofing gear, make sure to put them in a separate, easily accessible box so you can plug outlets, lock oven doors, secure bookshelves, etc., as soon as you move in. This way your children won't feel like the house is a place where practically everything is off-limits. Remember, you still need to be vigilant, especially when the surroundings (and potential dangers) are new.

5. Help them plan their goodbyes

It is an important part of the moving-on process to make sure that your kids have a chance to say proper goodbyes. It will help them feel a more complete sense of closure and less that they were yanked away from their previous life and lifestyle.

- Make time for saying goodbye to favourite haunts. Is there a special ice-cream shop your kids liked to visit? What about a museum, or park, or swimming pool? Ask your kids to make a list, or make a list with the entire family and set aside time each week to do at least one favourite thing. If you decide to do this as a family, make sure everyone is included. Make a calendar and mark out the days and event/place you'll go. This will prepare your children for saying goodbye to special places.
- Encourage your children to create an address book with contact info of friends, teachers, coaches, etc. can be kept. Encourage them to stay in touch, and assure them that their friends are just a mouse-click, postage stamp or phone call away.
- Stroll down memory lane. As you're preparing to move, tour the inside and outside of your home as you encourage your children to point out their favourite things about the house, the yard, and the overall neighbourhood. Bring along a camera and take photos of everything — even the crack in her ceiling that looks like a rabbit or the butterfly bush in your neighbour's yard.
- Make a good-bye book. Print out the photos, and create a scrapbook together. Have your kids dictate captions so you'll both remember why the items in the photos are special to them. When you're setting up the new house, use the book to look for similar features ("Hey, there's a big rock in this yard, too!") — finding these "twins" will help them feel more at home and that their new surroundings are not so different.
- Take a memento or two before the big family move. Your children may take comfort in bringing a little piece of the old house along to the new one — a snippet of wallpaper, a spare key, a cutting from their favourite flower bed to plant in the new garden. With time, your kids' love for the new house will blossom along with that bit of foliage, and while they may always have happy memories of their old house, chances are they'll come to be just as fond of the new one.

6. Have a going away party

A going-away party is a great way to create some lasting memories from the old home.

- Have your children help plan the event.
- Be creative. For example, buy a T-shirt or stuffed animal for your children and ask their friends to sign it or write a special message on it.
- Some may want a party while others prefer having a few close friends over for a final slumber party.
- Your children may want a few separate events, for example, one for school friends, one for neighbours and another for the baseball team. As best you can, try to accommodate their wishes, within reason. Remember that saying goodbye is an important step in the moving process.

- Whatever you host try not to overdo it. An overly elaborate affair could be more anxiety-provoking than comforting. You know your children's temperaments best, so let that be your guide in any party planning.

7. Keep routines and rules

Just because you're moving it doesn't mean everything else needs to change about your family life. Remember that children thrive with consistency.

- Keep your household rules the same. Kids will sometimes try to take advantage of certain situations or misconstrue major changes as meaning that regular household rules no longer apply. Showing a little leeway or turning a blind eye here and there may help to take the sting off negative emotions or make them feel a little more positive about the move. But don't let that niggling guilt get the better of you. Rules are rules and must apply whether in London or Kuala Lumpur.
- Stick to your schedule. You're excited to get everything unpacked and put away, but don't let your zeal to set up a new home disrupt your children's regular routine. When it's their usual lunchtime, take a break and have lunch. At naptime, don't skimp on their pre-snooze rituals, and if they're accustomed to a post-siesta walk, head out for a tour of the new neighbourhood. These breaks are worth it — they'll help them stay calm and you stay energized. Mealtimes, bedtimes and other routines should always stay the same.
- Continue fun family rituals, and start new ones. Is Tuesday always taco night? Continuing family pastimes you enjoyed in your old home can help kids feel at home in the new place. You can also come up with some new rituals, like pizza in the living room, for example.

8. Make the new house seem familiar

Familiarise your children with their new home. This will remove a lot of doubt and fear from the mix of emotions they may be experiencing. The sooner your children feel secure in the new place, the faster you'll all come to view your new dwelling as home, sweet home.

- Assemble their bedrooms ASAP. The first order of business when setting up a new home: Get your children's room ready first.
- If they do not have a specific plan or preference than use their old rooms as a blueprint. If their bed had a view out the window, try to place it in a similar spot in their new room (and use favourite/familiar sheets). Organize their books and toys on shelves in the same way, and maybe even take a few minutes to hang artwork they're used to seeing on their walls. This way, even if the rest of the house is in disarray, they'll have their very own safe haven.
- Plan a happy surprise. One parent who wanted to do something special enlisted the help of her real-estate agent. He planted some well-chosen toys for her daughter and son (8 and 3) to find in their empty closets. "For my daughter, we had an American Girl doll and my son this Little Tykes garage thing". The surprise worked. "Who wouldn't want to find

something wonderful in their empty closets after moving away from everything familiar?".

- Have a good night. Your kids' bed may be familiar, but there are new shadows on their walls, new sounds to hear, and new (fresh paint) smells to take in. Any or all of these may interfere with their ability to go to sleep (and stay asleep). But don't bring them into your bed — that's a habit that's hard to break. Instead, stick to their routine and if they can't settle down, then rub their back and reassure them that you'll stay right there until they fall asleep. If they wake during the night, do the same until they drift off again. It may take a few nights until they are back to their regular sleep schedule, but it'll be worth the wait! Soon enough everyone will be waking up happy to start the day in their brand-new digs.

9. Help them enter the new community

Feeling at home means being comfortable in your new surroundings overall and not only new dwellings. Your kids may have trouble adapting so try giving them a helping hand in being received by their new community.

- Set up play-dates or get your children involved in extracurricular activities to help them meet new friends.
- Go shopping and visit local restaurants, parks and attractions to help your kids get acclimated to your new community as soon as possible.
- Put together a folder for each child that includes brochures about the new area such as theatres, libraries, parks and sports teams. Be sure to include information on activities they enjoy.
- When your children start school, you may want to go along to meet as many teachers as possible or to introduce your kids to the principal. Try explaining to teachers, coaches and any other adults who are going to be part of the children's life that the move is going to be tough on them. Adults can be very willing to help, they just sometimes don't know how. You can recommend things that will help with the transition. For example, tell the teachers your kids' defining characteristics (e.g. athleticism) and ask if the teacher could pair them with another kid with similar interests.
- If your children are too young for school try spending time outside with them, even in bad weather, so that they are visible to other kids in the neighbourhood. Leave toys on the front lawn and go on walks with your children through your neighbourhood.

Set realistic expectations about the transition. Generally, teachers expect new kids to feel somewhat comfortable in their classes in about 6 weeks. Some kids need less time, others might need more. After the move, if you're still concerned about your child's transition, a family therapist might provide some helpful guidance.

10. Keep it positive!

Be upbeat. No matter how excited you might be as you prepare to move, you're bound to feel anxious as well — sofas don't always fit where they're supposed to, must-haves get misplaced, and that stack of boxes can seem sky-high. Even if you're less than thrilled about the move, it's always important to maintain a positive attitude about it. While it's impossible to shield your kids completely from moving-in chaos or your frazzled nerves, try hard to put on a happy face throughout the family move and avoid things like constant comparisons of the old community to the new community in a negative way. Remember, your attitude about your new surroundings will rub off on your kids no matter what age they are. So it will be easier for them to adjust if you're adjusting well, too.

A move can present many challenges, but good things also come from this kind of change. Your family might grow closer and you may learn more about each other by going through it together.

Special Tips

Dealing With Emotions

Children under 8 are less attached to people, such as friends, but very attached to places and routines. For this reason, it's important to stick to regular schedules as much as possible before, during, and after the move. But if your child is between the ages of 8 and 12, be prepared for him to react with anger, sadness, and tons of questions. Kids this age have an increased sense of independence, which leads to concern about performance in school. They also have stronger, longer-lasting friendships than they did just a year or two ago. Moving puts these hard-won ties in jeopardy. Your children may express outrage with questions like, "How could you do this to me?" or "Why are you being so unfair?"

Respond calmly with honesty, understanding, and firmness. Share your own feelings about the move, and talk about the people and places you will all miss. Avoid painting an overly rosy picture of your new place so that you can help your children avoid disappointing surprises. Offer them an appropriate way to process their feelings. You might give them a journal and ask them to express themselves in writing or by drawing pictures about the move — whether their feelings are positive or negative. "Some children may feel guilty about leaving their house behind, as if they might be hurting its feelings," explains Kimberly Daniels, a Connecticut elementary school guidance counsellor and child development expert. "It's important to reassure your child that the house you're leaving will be well cared for by the next family."

Make sure your children understand that all of their belongings are moving with you. If your family is temporarily dividing up — if one parent is moving first, for instance — be sure your children know when everyone will be together again.

Moving With Toddlers and Preschoolers

Kids younger than 6 may be the easiest to move as they have a limited capacity to understand the changes involved. Still, your guidance is crucial. Here are ways to ease the transition for young kids:

- Keep explanations clear and simple.
- Use a story to explain the move, or use toy trucks and furniture to act it out.
- When you pack your toddler's toys in boxes, make sure to explain that you aren't throwing them away.
- If your new home is nearby and vacant, go there to visit before the move and take a few toys over each time.
- Hold off on getting rid of your child's old bedroom furniture, which may provide a sense of comfort in the new house. It might even be a good idea to arrange furniture in a similar way in the new bedroom.
- Avoid making other big changes during the move, like toilet training or advancing a toddler to a bed from a crib.
- Arrange for your toddler or preschooler to stay with a babysitter on moving day.

Moving With School-Age Kids

Kids in elementary school may be relatively open to a move, but still need serious consideration and help throughout the transition.

There are two schools of thought about "the right time to move." Some experts say that summer is the best time because it avoids disrupting the school year. Others say that midyear is better because a child can meet other kids right away.

To avoid glitches that would add stress, gather any information the new school will need to process the transfer. That may include the most recent report card or transcript, birth certificate, and medical records.

Moving With Teens

It's common for teens to actively rebel against everything, so a big life-changing event like moving will be no exception. Your teen has probably invested considerable energy in a particular social group and might be involved in a romantic relationship. A move may mean that your teen will miss a long-awaited event, like a prom.

It's particularly important to let teens know that you want to hear their concerns and that you respect them. While blanket assurances may sound dismissive and unrealistic, it's legitimate to suggest that the move can serve as rehearsal for future changes, like college or a new job. However, also be sure to let them know that you hear their concerns and that you empathise.

After the move, consider planning a visit back to the old neighbourhood, if it's feasible. Also, see if the teen can return for events like prom or homecoming. If you're moving midway through a school year, you might want to consider letting an older teen stay in the old location with a friend or relative, if that's an option.