

Moving With Children

A Guide To Creating A Smooth Move For Families

Help your child beat the moving blues by following these simple suggestions and reminders from Allied Van Lines and Thomas Olkowski, Ph.D., top child psychologist and author of the book *Moving with Children*.

Communication Is Key

- **Talk the Talk:** Tell your child about the move as soon as possible – a child should never overhear the news by accident.
- **Discuss the Possibilities:** Talk to your children about the move, sharing the details, encouraging their questions and listening to their thoughts. Help your children talk about what is hard about the move, but also about what exciting things they might discover in their new neighborhood.
- **A Family Affair:** Schedule regular family meeting times to discuss any questions or concerns, and look for frequent opportunities to talk with your kids about the move, even if they aren't asking questions.
- **Engage Your Child:** For younger children, read children's books about moving. Talk about the pictures in the books and how they think the people in the pictures might feel.



Help Your Children Say Goodbye

- **Party Time:** Throw a moving party! This is a great opportunity for children to create scrapbooks and photo albums with their friends.
- **Sharing Memories:** Have your child make a list of pleasant memories he or she may want to retain about your neighborhood and community.

- **Saying Goodbye:** Supply children with autograph books to use when saying goodbye. The book can be used for personal messages from friends and loved ones.
- **Lasting Impression:** Leave a small memento at your old home that will symbolize your child's life there – plant a flower in the yard, hide a tiny toy in a secret place, or have your kids write a letter of welcome to the new children who might be moving in.

Involve Your Children In The Moving Process

- **Let Them Help:** Involve your children in your relocation. For example, bring older children on house-hunting trips or photograph the house you've selected as well as the neighborhood and the school.
- **Packing Together:** Let your children pack a few boxes of their own belongings, as well as a special backpack to carry with them on moving day with a few prized possessions. Have youngsters decide on items to be discarded or donated to a local charity.
- **Address the Issue:** Help your children memorize their new address by having them address packing cartons with different colored markers.

Get Excited About The New Neighborhood

- **Spend Some Quality Time:** Once you arrive at your new home, don't let unpacking, decorating and rearranging overwhelm you. Be sure to set aside blocks of time to explore your new neighborhood with your children, and plan enjoyable activities for the entire family.
- **Meeting the Neighbors:** Introduce yourself to new neighbors prior to moving day, and invite the neighborhood children over to get acquainted once you've settled in.
- **Engaging Activities:** Provide your kids with a sense of continuity by enrolling them in familiar activities they enjoy, such as dance classes or little league.
- **Meet the Teacher:** Contact teachers and principals at prospective schools to inquire about testing, attendance, special programs and extracurricular activities to ensure a smooth transition.

Stay In Touch

- **Keep in Touch:** Encourage your children to exchange addresses and telephone numbers with old friends.
- **Pen Pals:** Help your child write letters and call their old friends. Show them that whether your family is moving across town or across country, their connection with friends can still hold strong.
- **Make New Friends:** Your child may want to look at photos of people, places and things from your old neighborhood. Allow them to do so, but also encourage them to go outside and meet new friends.



- **Paint by Number:** Don't be afraid of color! A child's room is the perfect place for bright, bold colors, and your child will love to help you paint the space. However, beware of paint that is too dark for a small space.
- **Furnish in Style:** Incorporate a room's concept into the furnishings – not just the accessories. Be creative! Use baseball bat-shaped pillows to complement a ball imprint on your child's comforter or create a unique curtain rod using a golf club mounted above the windows.
- **Let There Be Light:** You can never have enough lighting. Fun and imaginative light fixtures can complement the child's room scheme, and multiple lighting sources are critical for any well-designed room.
- **The Perfect Bed:** From a whimsical circus tent to a magical princess bed, get creative with the design for your child's bed. Create a tent or canopy above the bed using lightweight fabrics and curtain rods or cable attached to the ceiling for support. A creative bed is a wonderful parent-child project to bring the room to life.
- **Self-Storage:** Organize in style with colorful storage bins. Keep bins cohesive by using multiple variations of one style.
- **Safety First:** As you finalize your child's new room, be sure electrical cords are tucked away, curtain strings are kept short, rugs are protected with non-skid padding and shelving units are strong and sturdy.

The Perfect Room

Include your child in decorating decisions for their new bedroom. The more comfortable they are in their new room, the more comfortable they will be with your new home.

Lisa LaPorta, design expert and co-host of HGTV's *Designed to Sell*, offers the following tips to create the perfect bedroom for your child:

- **Create a Concept:** Resist the urge to design a room around the latest hit movie or cartoon character, as children will quickly outgrow their fascination. Instead, work with your child to create a broad concept for the room, such as a jungle safari or underwater adventure, to help inspire their imagination. Remember that the shell of a room should be generic enough to adapt to the growing interests of your child.

Mission Possible: My Big Move

My name: _____

My new address and phone number:

Good things about my new neighborhood:

Good things about my new home:

Activities I would like to join:

My new school colors and mascot:

My best friends' addresses and phone numbers:

Moving Day Backpack Checklist:

- Scrapbook/photographs of my friends
- My favorite stuffed animal/toy
- My favorite books
- Letter writing pen and paper
- A disposable camera to take pictures of the big day
- Sidewalk chalk to decorate my new driveway
- My favorite snack
- Travel-size games

