



relocating with children

Allied Pickfords speaks to Family Matters
about addressing the stress of relocating with
your most precious possessions.

The relocation process is rife with stressors as a new assignment or repatriation signals new homes, new responsibilities, new schools, new social and business networks, and the sundry other challenges faced with each new relocation. The process is especially hard on children with the challenges changing depending on their age and how long they have been in the current location.

Tips of the Trade:

- Think about using a company that can provide multiple services and general support during the entire relocation process.
- Tell your children about the move as soon as possible so they don't overhear the news by accident or begin to sense that something is amiss (children are ultra-sensitive to body language and little things that we as adults take for granted!)
- Provide your kids with information about the new country, the new location, schools, speak to your relocation company about assisting with this at the very beginning of the process.
- Talk to your kids, sharing details of the move, the new home etc that you think they will understand – ask about and listen to their reactions.
- Children of different ages respond differently to a move. For example, younger children tend to miss familiar people like a favorite teacher, as well as safe, secure and familiar environments like school, or even their bedrooms. Although smaller children tend to worry about being left behind, they tend to be less traumatized by a move than older children as they have fewer friends and are more reliant on their parents for their sense of security. Stories about children who are moving houses can be of benefit.
- It's important to explain that toys are being packed to be taken to the new home, and not thrown away. You may want to ensure you keep their bedroom furnishings as these will provide immediate familiarity and comfort in their new bedrooms.
- Older children, of course, tend to miss their friends and others in the community with whom they have relationships, and this forms part of their own identity. They will be concerned about fitting in when they reach their new home and school and their lack of control over their environment can lead to frustration and anger. Share information with them about the place they are moving to, and most importantly listen to and acknowledge their concerns.
- You know best what your children like, and what might excite them about new possibilities. If you can demonstrate to them that this is a positive opportunity, they are more likely to look forward to it.
- Suggest that your children pack a special box with their most treasured possessions – they can even decorate the outside of the box so they can quickly identify it in your new home.
- Ask for your kids' input on decorating or arranging possessions in the new home which gives them a sense of control and ownership!
- Provide children of any age with a special address book in which they can collect and keep the contact details of all their friends.
- Make plans to continue your child's current activities (sports, dance, language, arts) in your new community – continuity makes the adjustment easier and faster.
- Arrange for your children to visit their new school and meet teachers before their first day of school.
- Explore the new city together, treat it as an adventure, it – as life itself – is a great adventure to be enjoyed together!

The relocation process, and moving to a new place, can be a rewarding and exciting time for both you and your children. By involving your children in all aspects of the relocation, you can reduce their stress levels and ease your own tension about the relocation.

Choose a relocation company that can address all the major steps of the relocation process such as house hunting, orientation services, school searches and information gathering, the move itself, and all other types of information. By doing so, they will take on the burdens of the relocation itself and allow you to focus on you and your children.

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