

How to cope with moving house

It is a big upheaval for the whole family, and adults tend to focus more on the practical things like getting everything moved to the new property, whereas for children it can be something totally different like leaving their friends behind or going to a new school. Quite often, when families move home, the adults make all the decisions and most often children feel completely powerless to the whole thing.

When we made a big move, the one that thought it would be worst was the sixteen year old at that time, just between GCSE and A Level, but actually it was a very successful move, they all settled quite quickly.

Yes, it was quite hard, but I was young so I adapted really well to it.

I'm from the Isle of Wight so I'd never like lived on the mainland before, so that was a bit scary.

TOP TIPS Look out for any changes in behaviour.

Children can show a different range of emotions due to the upheaval of moving homes: from insomnia, not sleeping throughout the night, interrupted sleep, or not eating as well as they used to, or even being more aggressive towards their parents, having more tantrums, screaming. Their behaviours tend to alter a little bit because of that change.

How can I help my child adapt?

It's really important that you talk to your child about the reasons why you're moving, how you're going to move, when you're moving, so they're more involved in the process and they're fully aware of what's going on. They've got time to say, okay, I'm moving next week, I've got time to say bye to my friends, and just know what's going on.

TOP TIP Involve everyone on moving day.

So get your child involved in moving into your new home, for example, getting them to choose the colour they want their bedroom to be, or design how they want the layout to be, because it gives them a sense of belonging - this is ours now, or this is mine now. And also maybe plan something: a pizza night, favourite films, where you can be all huddled together and talk about the new things you can do together in the new home, new ideas, so I think those two things are really important to do with your children.

TOP TIPS Contact the local Family information Service to find out what is available locally.

At first it was quite difficult because obviously you don't know anybody. I had a completely different accent because I was from Yorkshire, so everybody kind of - I made friends through that, it was kind of like they wanted to come and speak to me because I spoke differently.

It might be possible for you, as a parent, to go and visit the new school your child or children will be attending, so you get to meet the teachers, the head teacher, find out more about the curriculum, important events and even their parenting groups because they sometimes have parent and coffee mornings where you can get to interact with other parents. Get a good feel of the school. And also if you can't arrange an appointment with the school, maybe take them for a drive or walk past. Say, "Well, this is your new school," and they get a feel of it before they go in, so it's not so new and strange.

TOP TIPS Moving home is stressful for you as well...don't expect everything to go back to normal overnight.

Moving homes can be a real upheaval, not just for the parents, for the child, but for the whole family in general. But, overall, it's a process so there are going to be good days, there are going to be challenging moments, but overall everything settles down.

Involve your child as you are making decisions. Visit your child's new school before you move. Take time to listen to your child's concerns.