

WHEN KIDS MOVE

Are you anticipating a relocation anytime soon? Relocating with children can cause additional stress and additional problems. By helping your children become part of the solution you will go a long way toward reducing stress and the number of problems you will face. Military kids are less traumatized by moving than non military. That's because it is a way of life for them. Making moving a more "normal" part of life can reduce the trauma of moving. In other words, if you as parents accept the move as an important opportunity for the family, chances are the children will be more apt to cooperate. And there are ways to help the process.

- *Tell your kids what's happening; give them as much information as possible.*
- *Involve them in the planning and decision making process. Don't leave them to wonder, "Will I be going? Can I take my hamster? Where is this place and what is it like? "*
- *Try to move at the beginning or within the school year. It will be a lot easier for your child to make new friends, get established in after-school activities and sports during the school year. And most school curricula are similar in content. Ask the teacher to assign a "buddy " for the first few days at school.*
- *Help them make new friends; involve them in new activities and get involved in neighbourhood functions.*
- *Help them stay in touch with old friends. Try to strike a happy medium between the old and the new; this goes for parents, too. If you are too caught up in what you left behind, you will not see the opportunities in front of you.*
- *Be alert for behavioural changes. Try to pinpoint the problem before it gets out of hand.*
- *Try to maintain the same family routines, rituals and rules. Make your "house" a "home" as quickly as possible*
- *Moving creates its own anxieties; try to keep them in perspective. If you can't, your children won't.*

Above all, DON'T FEEL GUILTY! A lot has gone into making the decision to move; don't lessen the importance of the decision to move by feeling guilty.



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