



CREATIVE PARENTING

The Christian perspective for a happier, healthier home life

Moving to a New Home Part 2

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Your children may have many questions about moving; and after you have answered them all, they may ask them again and again. Remember to answer in a direct, honest, reassuring and optimistic way. Even when parents do their best to explain the hows and whys, sometimes children still struggle and may show outward signs of distress.

Children ages three to seven sometimes whine and cling. They may not know what words to use, but these behaviors communicate. Temper tantrums are not uncommon, nor is a return to babyish behavior. A child may show his insecurity through fear. Fear of the dark, nightmares, and renewed separation anxieties are common reactions to the idea of moving, suggest authors Charles Schaefer and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo.*

Taking time to play with young children, using dolls and stuffed animals to act out plays about moving, using worship time to talk about moving and finding new friends can be helpful. Selecting a text from Scripture or a song and memorizing it can strengthen faith and help bring a family together.

Older children often show their feelings in more subtle ways. If a child is upset about a move, you may see lethargy, irritability, and withdrawal. You may also see some passive aggression, meaning they may become forgetful, incessantly dawdling or procrastinating. They may pretend to not hear a call to dinner or to do chores. This noncompliant behavior can become maddening, but keep in mind it's really a way of expressing their fears and concerns.

The best approach to these negative behaviors is to keep your own attitude positive and find quiet times to talk with your children. Take the initiative to talk about moving and what the future will bring, don't just wait for the questions. Then leave the door open, so to speak, for your older child to bring up more of her concerns with you.

Moving holds many new opportunities for children and parents alike. It is important to celebrate the memories of your

old home, neighborhood, and church. Then help your children celebrate the new possibilities. I believe it is important to not do our children's thinking and feeling for them. Don't say, "Oh, you'll have lots of new friends in no time," or "Oh, you'll get over it—you'll get on with your life." Instead, acknowledge their feelings and fears, as well as your own, and gently talk about them as you build new relationships and a level of comfort in your new home. Moving can help us all recognize we can adjust to new situations, be adaptable and self-reliant. Certainly moving gives a family the opportunity to foster a strong sense of family togetherness in this shared experience.

Books for children:

Goodbye, House: A Kids' Guide to Moving by Ann Banks

Smooth Moves by Ellen Carlisle

I'm Not Moving, Mama by Nancy White Carlstrom

Berenstain Bears' Moving Day by Stan Berenstain (out of print—try your local library)

Books for adults:

Making the Big Move: How to Transform Relocation into a Creative Life Transition by Cathy Goodwin

Smart Moves: Your Guide Through the Emotional Maze of Relocation by Nadia Jensen

Web sites:

Buddy the Moving Van
<http://www.atlasvanlines.com/kids/kids.html>

What Kids Who Are Moving Should Do http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/home_family/moving.html NICK NEWS

Lesson plan for teachers:

www.nickjr.com/grownups/teachers/supplies/shows/nick_news/nn_moving.jhtml

* *How to Talk to Your Kids About Really Important Things*, 1994, Jossey Bass Publishers

