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Tips for Moving to A New House with Small children

Moving to a new house with children can be stressful and upsetting for everyone, but particularly young children, especially if they've previously only known one home. But with a little foresight, planning and some good old distraction techniques moving to a new home need not be traumatic.

Before moving

Keep the children as involved as possible in the process of moving to a new home. Before you start looking at houses talk to them about what they'd like a new place to have, or even draw pictures of what they want their new bedroom to look like.

Have older children research your new neighbourhood and make a list of places they'd like to visit and explore once you've moved.

Once you've bought a new house, either take the children for a walk-through so they can see their new bedrooms and play areas like the back garden. Or have them search for the house online and if possible, do a virtual tour.

If possible, make a few visits to the new neighbourhood before moving so the children can see where their new school is, or where the local playgrounds are and take some time to walk around so everyone can get their bearings.

During moving

Let each child pack a box of their favourite toys, then have them write their name on it, and decorate it. And make sure they help load it into the car or moving van so they know it's going with them to the new house.

Give each child a special responsibility on moving day and print them out a label with a job title like "head toy packer" making sure everybody's

favourite toys are accounted for, or “chief librarian” to make sure all the favourite books are packed, or “head gardener” responsible for collecting all the pot plants.

Keep as calm as possible as children will pick up on your stress and anxiety about the move, so try and focus on making it a fun adventure however and whenever you can. Have a picnic basket available well stocked with plenty of snacks and drinks to keep your children occupied as well as refuelled.

After moving

Once you arrive in your new house on moving day, unpack and set up the children’s rooms as a priority so they feel more at home. Make sure their beds are made and rooms are recognisable as theirs with familiar duvet covers, furniture, toys and books.

Keep a few large moving boxes for making forts.

Plan a special celebration “first night” dinner, that is easy and fun – perhaps have takeaways on the lounge floor.

After moving day try and return to a normal routine, of normal bedtimes and mealtimes, school and play as quickly as possible to help everybody settle.