



## Moving with children

For children, moving to another place is an intense experience and a decisive point in their lives; they lose their familiar neighbourhood, must say goodbye to their friends and are faced with an unknown new environment. The change of location means major changes to all areas of their lives.

Based on their experience of life, adults are much better prepared for such changes and can cope with them correspondingly. Children still lack this experience and ability. It is therefore important to involve the children in the whole preparation process, discuss the reasons for moving with them, care about their fears and questions, and respond to their wishes and proposals. This will help to stop them being afraid of moving and the changes connected to it.

Arrange a farewell party for the children to avoid that their old friends forget your children too fast and to allow your children to experience the importance of their personal relations to their friends. Your children will surely also want to take some pictures of their friends as souvenirs.

Little children and babies only realise what happens after a certain age; but they feel the tense atmosphere and additional activities around them – and they feel, of course, their parents' reduced attention towards them. Our experience has shown that little children often respond to the loss of attention with the only means of pressure they have. They simply become a bit ill! So you should think about the little ones and reserve some time to play with them; think about an emergency plan in case they get ill during the preparations for your move.

On the day of removal, children can stay with relatives, friends or a babysitter. Only if they are old enough and do not disturb the moving process they may watch the moving activities on site or even help a bit.

Explain to your children that you are not taking their toys away, but only put them in boxes for travelling. By the way – the best place for a child's favourite cuddly toy is in the arms of your child during moving.

Let your child help with the preparations for the move. This will give your child the feeling that he/she is not useless. Let your children pack their most important personal things themselves. Children often fear that their belongings get lost or are damaged. Let your child talk to the removers if he/she wants to. If they are on good terms with each other your child will certainly get a positive impression of the move. Please do also try to keep up the familiar atmosphere of your children's playroom as long as possible. Try to pack a part of their things towards the end of the preparations, maybe even on the very last day.

Make a family visit to your new home already before you move and show your children their new rooms. Let your children make themselves familiar with the new surroundings; explore the neighbourhood together, find out where playgrounds, the swimming bath, the kindergarten and/or school are located. Tell your children which sports clubs, spare time activities, etc. they can find in the vicinity. Take your time to explore the new town together with your children.

Moving house is not the ideal moment to buy new furniture for your children. This should be avoided as their new room is already sufficiently unfamiliar to them. Leave your children some things they know well as, for instance, the familiar bed or their old wardrobe, etc. The familiar items give the children some level of security. However, one or two new items add a positive touch to the change. Be tolerant of teenagers' needs; if they want to design their rooms themselves do not stop them from doing so – even if it's not in line with your taste, teenagers will feel comfortable within their "own four walls".

The children's rooms should be the first to be fully furnished to give the little ones enough time to get used to the new environment.

Take your child with you when you introduce yourself to the neighbours, and enrol your child at a local club according to his/her interests. This will help children to quickly make new friends. Find out whether there are children of the same age living in the neighbourhood. New friends help children to feel at home.