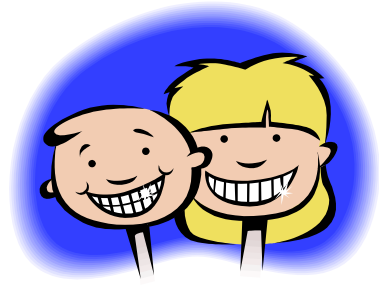


Moving with Children...



A move to a new home can be an exciting experience for children, if you employ careful planning from start to finish.

Planning begins with informing them of the upcoming move and includes organizing the details of relocating, as well as getting acquainted with your new community.

Suddath Relocation Systems recognizes the particular needs and emotional reactions of children and has prepared this booklet to help make moving with children easier and enjoyable for the entire family. You can depend on Suddath's knowledge and experience in helping you prepare for your move.

The Positive Approach

When a family is planning to relocate, the reaction of parents to the upcoming changes is most important. Children normally reflect their parents' attitudes. Accentuate the positive. A positive parental attitude will go a long way toward soothing fears and creating an atmosphere of anticipation for the children.

- **Prepare them in advance for the move.**
Tell them immediately about the move. Give them time to adjust to the idea.
- **Answer all questions.**
Explain the reasons for the move as explicitly as necessary, depending on the child's age. An honest question-and-answer session will give you an idea of the specific concerns your children have about the move. This will give you the chance to resolve their fears and let them know you are interested in their opinions and feelings.
- **Permit children to participate.**
This will give them a sense of responsibility and self-worth.

With these steps, you can ease the insecure feelings some children experience when removed from familiar surroundings. But remember, moving can be a great personal growth opportunity for all family members, including children.

Preparing Children for the Move

Tell school-age children early that the family will be moving. Don't let them find out by overhearing conversations. The major problem facing children is fear of the "unknown."

- **Infants** – As long as they are comfortable and their routine undisturbed, they will be the least affected by the move.
- **Toddlers** – To them, a minute and a month are only words. They need to know only that the family is moving soon. The main thing is to assure them that when the family goes, they go too. Keep your tot with you as much as possible while preparations for the move are being made. Let the child pack a few of his or her most treasured possessions, even though the items might be old and battered. Assisting in small ways will help strengthen your child's feeling of security, sense of belonging and importance as an individual.
- **Elementary to Preteens** – This group is particularly vulnerable to the unsettling effects of moving. Their world is beginning to expand beyond the family circle, and they are especially concerned with how they'll fit into the new environment. However, studies of fourth to sixth grade children who have not moved at all. They generally adapt quickly to a change in surroundings and take new experiences in stride. Their overall education seems to have benefited as a result of travel and other factors associated with family moves.
- **Teen-agers** – Their social activities encompass a much wider area, and members of this age group might be disturbed at the thought of relinquishing vital interests and special friendships.

For some juniors and seniors, their current school may be critical for a specific internship program or sports scholarship. If this is the case, you might want to allow teen-agers to stay in their current location with a relative or family friend until they graduate. If doubt exists about this arrangement, a third-party consultation with a guidance counselor, clergyman or psychologist might help.

Assist your son or daughter by finding out as much about the prospective school as possible. Contact the administrator, guidance counselor and/or athletic coach for children involved in sports. Ask for the most current issues of the school newspaper, and see if a yearbook can be obtained.

Rap Sessions

Both preteens and teen-agers may want to talk about the move and ask questions. Early discussion of the following topics should help older children adjust to the upcoming relocation:

- Why the move is being made.
- What the new location is like physically.
- Expected advantages of the new area.
- New friends and activities for both parents and children.
- The possibilities of having old friends come for a visit.
- Children's expectations.
- The new home, particularly the children's rooms and advantages of the new home over the old one.
- When to move.

When to Move

The final discussion point – when to move – must take a wide variety of circumstances into consideration. The best time to move is when it's most convenient and advantageous for all members of the family, although the decision might depend on circumstances beyond the family's control. The activities and priorities of the **whole family** should be considered. Let your children express their points of view.

Your family's decision on when to move depends on your particular situation. It might be as soon as the house is sold, at the end of a school year or during a school term. Remember, the heaviest demands are placed on moving company vans, equipment and personnel during the summer months when most children are out of school.

There are some distinct advantages to moving during a school term:

- Preteens and teen-agers will make new friends more quickly through school.
- School curricula are more flexible today, resulting in a smoother transfer.
- Some school districts have a 12-month school term with no general summer vacation.
- It is easier to transfer school records during a school year.
- Children will be able to enjoy summer vacation with new friends.

Pre-Planning the Move

Involve the children. If possible, take them on at least one house-hunting trip. Keep their needs and concerns in mind when searching for a new home. Take pictures of the family's new home, school, neighborhood and places of interest in the area. Children can show the photos to their current friends and/or start a scrapbook of the move. Get a city map and let the children familiarize themselves with street names and locations of schools, parks, libraries and churches.

As moving day approaches, let your children help with preparations. Depending on their ages and abilities, they can:

- Run errands.
- Notify friends of the pending move.
- Send change-of-address cards to magazines and other publications.
- Assist with sorting what to take and what to discard.
- Help organize a garage sale to dispose of unwanted items and earn some spending money.
- Pack favorite non-breakable items from their bedrooms and other rooms.
- Put aside special things, such as favorite toys, that should be packed and loaded on the moving van last and unloaded first.
- Check the house before the moving van leaves to ensure nothing has been overlooked.

Adjusting to the New Home

Here are some suggestions on adjusting to a new location that come from families' actual experiences. Many of these suggestions occur naturally and without a great deal of effort, while others must be planned to be successful.

Parents

- Let the ties to the old home and friends be loosened gradually. Settling into a new environment takes time. Each child will adjust at his or her own pace.
- Be tolerant of disturbing symptoms if they occur. Give children the extra attention they need.
- Take time out to answer children's questions or for a stroll around the neighborhood.
- Let children pick out the color schemes for their rooms (if they are to be redecorated) and arrange the furniture to suit themselves.
- Join a church, temple or other place of worship, to establish a sense of continuity from the old home to the new one.
- Take the younger children to their new school along the route they will be using every day. Show them around the school and introduce them to their teacher before school starts. They will feel happier and more confident when accompanied by a parent.
- Encourage them to bring new friends home to visit, occasionally making it a family activity, such as a backyard picnic.
- Locate the nearest library. Some libraries have special programs for children and teen-agers, and a librarian often can provide information about local youth organizations.
- Ask neighbors, teachers and church leaders for information or assistance.
- Do things together as a family, taking into consideration both parents' and children's interest.

Young People

- Learn your way around as soon as possible. Familiarize yourself with the neighborhood.
- Be willing to take the first step toward making new friends. Be pleasant to everyone because it will pay off later. Things that were “in” at your old school might be “out” at the new one. You shouldn’t change your basic personality or outlook in an attempt to fit in with the crowd, but keep an open mind. Most of all, be yourself.
- Join a group: school clubs, the YMCA or YWCA or other youth organizations. Volunteer your services for a worthy cause.
- Get involved in your schoolwork quickly, so you can have more leisure time.

The School

Since the majority of communities require that children attend school in their residential district, the selection of a home should take into account the equality of the area’s schools. What is needed ... what is desired ... what can be afforded ... all are part of the final decision as to a new home and new school.

Ways to Judge a School District

- Appearance of facilities.
- Extent of the educational program, such as kindergarten, cooperative education and provisions for children with disabilities.
- State and regional accreditation.
- Teaching and administrative staff.
- Curricula available.
- Class size.
- Provisions for textbooks, school bus service, a hot lunch program and extracurricular activities.

Transfer of Records

Make school transfer arrangements as soon as possible. Pupil placement in the new school might be based on records presented at the time of enrollment.

Notify the current school as to when your child will be leaving it, and find out what transfer records are available. Helpful records include:

Elementary

- Transfer card and/or latest report card.
- Birth certificate.
- Medical records.
- List of textbooks used
- Grading method.
- Statement from teacher describing your child’s achievement level, interests and need (if any) for improvement.

Secondary

- Transfer card or transcript of academic and medical records.
- Description of courses taken.
- List of textbooks used.
- Grading methods
- Description of any special program participation.

Provide the new school with the name and address of the old one, together with the name and address of the old one, together with the name of the person to contact for transcripts of records. Some schools require **students** to furnish transcripts of their records. To be on the safe side, try to obtain a copy of your child's transcripts to take with you.

Other Considerations

- Inquire what students wear to school in the new community. There might be a dress code.
- Find out if there are facilities for your child's special hobby or activity.

The Trip to the New Home

Planning the trip, particularly when children are involved, will help avoid many potential mishaps and result in a much more enjoyable journey for everyone, including the family pet. Most families moving to a new city find it convenient to travel by car. This allows for a more flexible plan, as well as for space to take along those extra-special possessions.

Budgeting Time

- Allow enough time for a leisurely trip with several stops each day to give your children a chance to work off excess energy. If you have an infant, allow him or her a chance to kick and stretch while laying flat. Occasional stops also will keep the driver from becoming too tired.
- Stop early for an unhurried meal and a good night's rest.
- Time permitting, visit special points of interest en route – state arks, recreational areas and other attractions. However, if you deduct your moving expenses on your tax return, you can claim mileage only for the most direct route.
- Plan your schedule so you arrive at your destination before the moving van.

Overnight Accommodations

- Make hotel or motel reservations in advance; remember to confirm them.
- Most national chains will reserve rooms in advance for each overnight stop en route. Ask the local branch about this service before starting your trip.
- Rates at many motels and hotels allow for children in parents' room at no extra cost or at a nominal cost for an extra bed or two. Baby cribs are ordinarily

provided at your request. (In spite of the additional cost, you might find it more restful to have a separate, connecting room for the children.)

Meals

If the trip will take no more than a day, a picnic lunch to eat at a wayside stop can be fun.

Even if you plan to have the main meals at restaurants, it's a good idea to keep some snacks and a thermos of a favorite drink in the car. Snacks might include fresh fruits, raisins, crackers, or dry cereal. Avoid anything that will melt, get sticky or is attached to a stick.

For the little ones, take along dry formula that requires only the addition of water or a prepared baby food that needs no refrigeration.

If you have a baby, be sure to take along several bottles of water to avoid upsets caused by an abrupt change in the water supply.

Clothes

Select comfortable clothes in which to travel. Take a few washable outfits. You might want to let the child pack his or her own clothes in a small case or carryall. It gives children a sense of importance they will find fun.

For a baby, keep clothing as simple as possible but make sure to dress the baby in layers in case of change of climate.

Take along suggestions...

Baby

Make a list of all the baby's daily needs at home. Take only those items that are absolutely necessary. Send everything else on the moving van.

Here's a checklist of things to take:

- Suitable clothing.
- Diaper bag.
- Blankets.
- Disposable diapers.
- Bottles with plastic throwaway liners, nipples and pacifiers.
- Baby food, formula, fruit juice, water and a can opener.
- Favorite cuddle toy.
- Baby toiletries such as powder, lotion, oil and cotton balls.
- Safety-approved infant car seat.

- First-aid kit. (Discuss with your pediatrician any medications you should have on hand include a thermometer, baby pain reliever and a small hot water bottle, which can be used as and ice bag.)

Toddlers

Traveling with toddlers can be both tiring and fun. They are extremely inquisitive and quick to get a way if not watched. A little forethought given to their particular needs will be to your advantage. Among things to consider are:

- Collapsible stroller.
- Child's portable car toilet.
- Safety-approved car seat.
- Favorite small toys and children's books.

Elementary to Preteen

Children in their elementary and preteen years are easier to keep content during a long trip. Provide them with a few travel games, coloring books and a portable music player with headphones.

Teen-agers

Teen-agers probably will have their own ideas of travel entertainment, but might enjoy favorite books, travel games or a portable music player with headphones.

Useful Items for Everyone..... Keep Them Handy!

- First-aid kit.
- Flashlights and extra batteries.
- Litter bag.
- Shoe bag on the back of the front seat, useful for holding maps, toys, tissues and other items.
- Pre-moistened towelettes and paper towels.

Set aside the things you have decided to take with you. Mark them: DO NOT LOAD. This will prevent them from accidentally being loaded on the moving van with the rest of your household goods.

Loading the Car

Load luggage carefully. Distribute weight as evenly as possible for better car handling. Put the heaviest luggage in the forward area of the car trunk or on the floor behind front seats. Make sure it cannot shift. If using a car-top carrier, put the heaviest luggage on the bottom.

For Safety's Sake

Make safety rules applicable to **all** passengers in the car and **stick to them**.

- Everyone must be seated whenever the car is in motion.
- Safety belts must be fastened.
- Infants and toddlers should be in safety-approved car carriers or car seats.
- Be sure all hands are inside the car before closing the door. All hands, heads and items should be kept inside the car at all times.
- Remove all loose objects from the dashboard and rear-window shelf.
- Never leave children in the car alone
- Never leave the keys in the ignition when you get out.

In Summary

- Talk with your children about the move.
- Take into consideration all family circumstances when selecting the moving date.
- Plan your move six weeks in advance to ensure planning time.
- Assign each child specific duties to help in preparing for the move.
- Be there to offer support to your children as they say goodbye to friends and encourage them to make new ones.
- Finally, make the move a family project. Allow the experience to draw all of you closer together.