

## **Counseling Corner**

### **Making A Move To A New Home Less Stressful For Children**

from the American Counseling Association

Americans have a well-deserved reputation for not staying in any one place too long and summer is a prime time for household moves to take place.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 12% of us, or some 36.5 million people, moved from one home to another last year. But whether it's just a move across a town or county, or a big move across the entire country, it's almost always going to bring high levels of anxiety for your children.

While moving is certainly stressful for all family members, adults can more easily understand the reasons behind a move. It might be to a new job, to be closer to family members, or just a chance to move up to something new, different and better. Adults see most moves as positive opportunities.

But for children, moving almost never appears, at least at first, to be anything positive. What they see and feel is a real sense of loss. They're also anxious about all the unknowns related to the new home and surroundings.

A starting point in helping children feel more comfortable about a move is explaining the reasons why the move is taking place. Clear explanations can help them better understand and accept why this is a good or necessary thing happening.

It's also important to acknowledge that sense of loss your children are experiencing. Most kids will feel they are losing "best friends," as well as activities they've grown familiar with in their current neighborhood. For teens, it may mean the end of a romantic relationship. Let them know that you understand what they're feeling. Counter the inevitable tears and complaints with reassurances of the good things to come in the new home. Be liberal with your hugs and love, too.

If possible, try to introduce your children to their new home prior to the actual move. Maybe you can travel to see the new place with them. If not, gather info from the local chamber of commerce and Internet to share. Get a map of the new town, pictures of the new house and their rooms, and share information about things that will interest them, such as their new school, sports teams, movie theaters or a town mall.

Moving to a new home is never easy, but with a little effort, understanding and a lot of support, you can make it much less stressful for your children.

*"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at counseling.org*

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