

ADAPTING TO A NEW SCHOOL

QUESTION: What can I do to make the transition of a family move easier on my child?

ANSWER: A change in jobs or family situations may require a move to a new area and a new school for your child. This change interrupts friendships and academic progress, and may cause stress in a child. To make the transition of a move easier, parents may follow these suggestions.

1. Explain to your child why the move is necessary. Children understand that moves are necessary when new jobs or family situations are involved.
2. Learn about the new area and school before your move. Gather pictures, newspapers, and brochures to share with your child.
3. Look for and list the positive aspects of the move. Does the new school offer a wider range of programs? Are there special activities available in the community?
4. Visit the school and meet with the principal with your child. Attend with your child the first day if it is recommended.
5. Meet with the teacher and discuss the transition process. Talk to the teacher about curriculum and social changes.
6. Become familiar with school rules.
7. Become involved in the new school. Attend school functions and visit the classroom.
8. Encourage your child's participation in extra-curricular activities. Participation leads to new friendships.
9. Keep track of your child's progress. Talk to him/her about daily activities at school, homework, new friends, etc. Listen to your child to see how he/she is adapting.
10. If the school does not already utilize this system, ask if your child can be assigned a school "buddy" to help him/her become accustomed to the new school.

Support your child through this period of change. A new school means new friends, curriculum, teachers, and rules. Look for warning signs that your child is not adapting and seek help from school personnel if necessary.