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Making a Family-Friendly Move This Summer



It's summertime and moving season is in full swing, many families are preparing for life in a new home. The summer months often offer increased flexibility, better weather and the opportunity to make the move a family event. However, whether it's moving to a different home around the block, or relocating to a new city, families face additional challenges when moving with children.

Making Moving Manageable

For both parents and children, moving to a new home can sometimes be a traumatic experience. A recent Rent.com survey found that 69 percent of families have moved to a new home at least once during their children's lifetime and 18 percent of families have moved three or more times! Since changing homes can be tough on kids, 54 percent of parents worry about their children's apprehensions surrounding the move, while additional concerns include finding the right time for the kids to move (31 percent), making sure moving day logistics run smoothly with the kids (27 percent) and getting kids motivated to help with moving (22 percent).

Children also fret about their new homes, but in different ways from their parents. More than half of American parents (54 percent) report that their children worry most about making new friends at school or in their neighborhood, 18 percent wonder if they'll truly feel at home in the new place and 14 percent feel anxious about getting acclimated to the new neighborhood.

Happiness at Home

When choosing where to move, parents are tasked with the challenge of securing a place that's affordable and located in a family-friendly neighborhood, while children may be expected to start at a new school and get used to unfamiliar surroundings. When choosing a new family home, an overwhelming 61 percent of parents cited a safe neighborhood as being the most important factor, while a quarter of parents (24 percent) believe that a living space large enough for the entire family to live in comfortably is equally important.

However, the younger members of the families have different priorities on their lists! One third of parents (32 percent) say that children want their own bedrooms, 28 percent say kids wish for a neighborhood with other kids their own age and 26 percent responded that what kids really pine for is a big backyard with enough room for a swing set, pool or tree house.

Below are a few tips to make the move easier on your kids and have some fun in the process:

- **Be Up Front:** Communicate with your kids about the move as soon as possible so they have time to adjust to the idea of change. While 10% of our respondents said that they have or would tell their kids about the move over email or text message, we recommend a more personal approach such as over a meal or during a family meeting. Give your kids as much information as you can about the upcoming move and answer their questions truthfully. Involve them in the moving preparations by talking to them about the places you're seeing and share photos or videos of potential new homes. This will help them feel valued in the process and will help you uncover what's most important to them in a new home.
- **Take Care of Mr. Bear:** Whether it's their favorite stuffed animal, doll, toy or blanket, if you have small children, set aside special time to sit with them and make a small box of their favorite things. Make sure you keep these in a special place during the move so they don't get lost or end up on a moving truck that might result in a long separation from your child. These little creature comforts can go a long way towards making kids feel safe and secure among new surroundings.
- **Making Space Personal:** To help your kids feel truly at home in their new place, give them the freedom to decorate their own rooms and make a space where they feel really comfortable. Allowing them to choose their paint color, curtains, bedding and décor will get them more excited about the move, help them feel more in control and ultimately give them a safe haven from the stress of a new city. Before you move, visit the new home with your kids and show them where their new rooms will be. If visiting is not an option, share pictures or floor plans of the room so they can get excited about the possibilities for their new room and home.
- **New Best Friends:** If your kids are nervous about making new friends, make it a point to research activities of interest to them in your new community. It's easy to get

information online about sports leagues, art classes, book clubs, parks, public pools, etc. Getting them involved with the things they already love to do will put them at ease and help them make friends that much quicker. If you live in a building or on a street with other kids their age, make an effort to introduce yourselves to those families and arrange a get together so your kids can meet.

- **Around Town:** To combat the anxiety your kids might have about getting acclimated to their new neighborhood, make a point to take your time showing them around town. Whether you're walking around the block, biking around your neighborhood or in the car about town, make it more fun with a scavenger hunt approach. Give your kids "clues" each step of the way and see if they can figure out what the next destination is. Even running errands can be fun if your kids are trying to guess what store you're headed to next!

- **New School:** If your move involves your children changing schools, see if you can find a time for them to visit their new school prior to their first day to walk the grounds. Getting around school will be one less thing they have to worry about when the halls are crowded with strangers and they are trying to fit in and make friends.

Rental Relief

If your move involves finding a new rental home, there's a place you can turn that can help ease the pain of the moving process. With a free rental search tool, Rent.com can help families find the home of their dreams. Renters can use the site's robust search tool to view detailed rental listings, which include photos, floor plans, and virtual tours – all for free. The search capabilities will help you to locate a property close to your children's school, or one that features a pool or a garden so that they can spend their free time outdoors.

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