

# LESS STRESSFUL MOVING FOR *Kids + Pets*



## 10 WAYS TO MAKE MOVING WITH PETS & KIDS LESS STRESSFUL

Despite any worries about new schools, new bedrooms, or even new backyards that your kids and pets might feel, you can help mitigate moving stress for your entire family. Consider these 10 tips to help make any move easier for kids and pets.

### *For Children*

**VISIT THE NEW HOUSE:** Check out the new place before you move. If they didn't see it while it was on the market, the home inspection is the perfect time to drop in and let your kids check out the house. Then, try to create excitement for them in small ways. Walk around the neighborhood to find parks and places for kids their age to enjoy. When you create something for them to look forward to, you can help take their mind off the road bumps.

**LET THEM DECORATE THEIR NEW BEDROOM:** Make sure your child's belongings are the first in the new house and the last out of the old house. Then, shift the focus to [setting up their new bedroom](#) as soon as you get to the new place. Before the big move, eliminate uncertainty by telling them what is going into the new bedroom, or let them pick out any new decor. Because children spend so much time in their bedrooms, how they want it to look should be a priority. An exciting new space can ease the transition into the new house.

**ANSWER ALL OF THEIR QUESTIONS WITH HONESTY:** When you talk to your children about making a big move, be sure to acknowledge any fears and feelings that they have about moving. Maybe they'll miss their friends in the neighborhood, or they're worried they'll leave something behind. Take time to listen to them, even if they express the same fears more than once. Be honest, and don't hide your own feelings when [answering their questions](#).

Moving to a new house can be equal parts exciting and stressful for many reasons. It can be exciting to imagine a new space to decorate while stressful to worry about taking on a new loan. You can be thrilled to move to a bigger place while worrying about finishing the move in time.

For young kids and pets, uprooting to a new residence feels stressful for different reasons.

The good news is that there are a few simple fixes to help reduce the stress felt by kids and pets, especially those making a move for the first time.



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**GIVE THEM POWER WHILE LOOKING AT HOMES:** Even when [house shopping](#), talk to your kids about their must-haves and must-not-haves. For instance, maybe they prefer a big backyard and want their bedroom as far away from their brother's room as possible. If you are building a house, make sure each child has some special part in the process.

**FRONTLOAD INFORMATION:** "[Frontloading](#)" is a term that educators use in the classroom to make sure their students are prepared for any change in procedures (except during pop quizzes!). When a family is moving, it's important to start "frontloading" as early as possible to provide kids with as much information as you know about the move before it happens. Disarm them about the pros and cons of the move. If you can, take your kids to their new school to meet teachers and administrators before their first day in class. If you're moving in the summer, enroll your kids in a summer camp to start making new friends early.

**READ OR MAKE BOOKS ABOUT MOVING:** Many great books have been written to help kids of all ages prepare for a move. Younger children might appreciate a [picture book about moving](#), while older kids can [read chapter books](#) that are more age-appropriate. Also, spend time making your own family "[moving book](#)" as a way to keep photos and memories of the old house.

## For Pets

**MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY:** Keep your pets' [daily routine](#) the same in the weeks leading up to the move. Though it's a busy time — packing boxes and sorting through items is time-consuming — don't neglect your pets! Make sure they take their daily walks, are fed and receive treats at the same time and enjoy the same amount of playtime. Pets can become agitated with the disarray caused by a move. Eliminate as much stress as possible by keeping their days the same.

**MAKE YOUR NEW HOUSE PET SAFE:** A new house can come with new hazards for your pet. When you move in, make sure you [pet-proof](#) your home by:

- Securing windows, doors and gates
- Checking for old insect traps and anything poisonous that was perhaps left behind
- Covering vents, especially if you have an aviary or reptile pet
- Removing poisonous plants from the yard
- Checking the new yard and fences for holes

**TAKE TIME TO SETTLE IN:** Find a safe space for your pet

on move-in day so they aren't exploring the new home with doors opening and closing. [Before bringing them in](#), prepare their familiar beds, toys, and food bowls because these connections will help relax them. Then, for the first 24 hours of the move, gradually introduce them to each room in the house instead of letting them run from room to room. Also, watch your pet for signs of anxiety. In [dogs](#), that could mean using the bathroom indoors, scratching furniture or walls, digging into the garbage and more. [Cats](#) may start eating more or less, crouching as they walk around the house or being more vocal than normal. Even [reptiles](#), [birds](#), and [fish](#) can show signs of stress from a move if you know what to watch for.

**KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR VET:** If you're moving within the same area, let your vet know about your plans. Your veterinarian has your pet's health history and knows them well enough to provide sound advice about reducing anxiety and keeping your pet happy. If you're moving out of your current area, your trusted vet can ensure records are transferred while still giving you tips to help ease stress and find a pet clinic in your new location.

