

- 5 Once you know which school your child(ren) will be going to, make contact with the school. Try to establish an e-mail pen friend so that they can start to get to know someone in their class prior to the move.
- 6 If you have any choice about the timing of the move, choose to move during the Summer holidays so that your child(ren) will join a new school at the start of the academic year. If this is not possible, move during the Easter or Christmas holidays.
- 7 Help your child(ren) to plan their goodbyes: people they wish to visit before moving; leaving parties; final visits to favourite places and restaurants; time to say goodbye to friends and family.
- 8 Encourage your child(ren) to 'make up' with friends they may have fallen out with in anticipation of the move. This will enable them to say a proper goodbye to significant friends. Remember that the more successfully you leave the easier it is to join your new place.
- 9 Think about how to keep in touch with family members and special friends (addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers). Help your child(ren) to be realistic about this so that they do not promise to keep in touch with too many people and then feel disappointment in themselves when they can't achieve this.
- 10 Help your child(ren) to gather photographs and souvenirs to remind them of special people and places.
- 11 Try to keep to your usual family routines as much as possible up to the time of the move as this will help your child(ren) to feel secure.
- 12 Keeping a family scrapbook to record things you have done and seen in a particular location.
- 13 Teach your child(ren) about any different customs that they need to know for their new location.
- 14 Plan visits home and visits from extended family to help maintain a sense of closeness and continuity with significant people.

- 15 If most of your belongings are going into storage, keep out things which will help you feel at home in your new environment.
- 16 Talk about the move with your child(ren) and share your feelings about it.
- 17 When you arrive at your new destination, get your child(ren) into school as soon as possible.
- 18 Explore your new environment together.
- 19 Establish new family routines as quickly as possible.
- 20 Remember that it takes time to adjust to a new place. Don't take on too much too quickly or you may end up feeling overwhelmed.

The purpose of this leaflet is to help people understand the psychological and emotional dimensions of moving so that they can minimise the impact for their children and make the move as positive an experience as possible.

If you are concerned about how your children are responding to the move, talk to your school or if you are overseas you can also contact the DCYP Educational Psychology team responsible for the MOD School.

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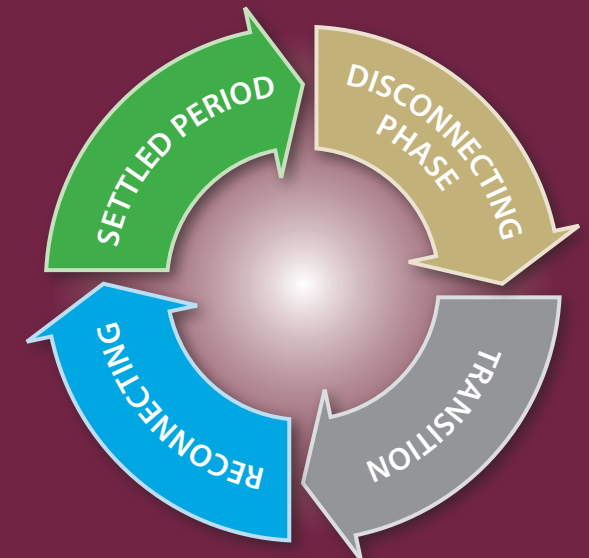
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DIRECTORATE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE Families on the Move

All Service families will experience a number of moves during the serving person's career. Many families will move within the UK, others will also move overseas.

Everyone experiences life individually; however there are some shared stages of transition.



The Transition Experience

Moving can be either viewed as a 'hassle' or welcomed as an opportunity to experience living in a new location, whether it is a different area in the UK or an overseas destination.

1 SETTLED PERIOD

When a family have been in one place for a while they will usually feel settled, secure and involved.

These feelings come from knowing the area, having friends and being able to take part in a range of activities.

There will usually be feelings of closeness to others and have a sense of belonging to the community.

As soon as a family know that they are assigned, they are likely to begin disconnecting by loosening their emotional ties with their current location.



2 DISCONNECTING PHASE

This is usually characterised by spending more time and energy thinking about where you are going than where you are at present.

There will usually be a sense of excitement about the place you are going to, but also there can be a great feeling of sadness about leaving familiar places and people behind. This period of 'disconnecting' may begin 3-6 months prior to the assignment date.

Some children may break friendships or develop a negative attitude towards school - this is because it is easier to leave people and places you feel negative about.

Children who are moving may inadvertently find themselves excluded from things, e.g. not being selected for a sports team or to take part in a play because they will not be around later on.

3 TRANSITION

The time of the actual move may feel like chaos as almost everything in a family's life changes.

Many family routines will be disrupted and this can feel a very unsettling time, particularly for young children.

This period of chaos/disruption may be prolonged if the family have to vacate their home and move to temporary accommodation before getting their overseas passage.

During the move, families will often find themselves in situations where everything is unfamiliar and even simple tasks, e.g. making phone calls, can be much harder to achieve.

This can lead to a temporary loss of confidence and feelings of uncertainty/insecurity.



4 RECONNECTING

When you arrive in your new location you will be busy meeting new people and finding your way around. It will often feel like a very exciting time and your family may feel as if they are on holiday, especially when you arrive in an overseas location.

This can be disorientating, for example dealing with a foreign language.

These are normal feelings that everyone experiences. The feeling of excitement may soon disappear and individuals may begin to feel overwhelmed by all the differences and changes which have arisen because of the move.

It may take up to 6 months for individuals to feel settled in their new environment, and develop the feeling of belonging, closeness and identity which they had prior to the move.

Families who have moved frequently can become very skilled at adapting to changes. However, there may be times when a particular move is more difficult for some members of the family. The suggestions which follow will help to make all your future moves as smooth as possible.

1 Tell your child(ren) that you will be moving and give them an idea of the timescale. It is much better that they hear about a move from their parents than from someone else.

2 Your child(ren) will need something visual, like a calendar (showing how many sleeps till the move) to help them understand the timescale.

3 Talk to your child(ren) about the new destination and help them to find out about the new area. The internet will often be the easiest way to find out more.

4 Find out about schools in the new area. If you have any difficulty doing this, contact the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS), who will be able to give you advice and guidance.

E-mail DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.gov.uk or phone **+44 (0)1980 618244 / Mil 94344 8244**. Remember it is a parental responsibility to apply for a school place.