

Military Families on the Move

A Guide for Helping Kids and Their Families
During PCS Moves



Produced by the Military Family Research Institute at
Purdue University

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So you're moving! We know how difficult and stressful it can be to have to move, say goodbye to your friends, switch schools, start over and all that. We wanted to help you during this process, so we've created this brochure that includes information on three different subjects:

1. *Saying Goodbye*
2. *What's There?*
3. *How to Move*

SAYING GOODBYE

It's Permanent Change of Station (PCS) time, which means that you're moving. So now what? Telling everyone, packing, moving, changing schools, and saying goodbye to your friends, your room, and your home. It's hard, isn't it?

You'll still have your family. And you'll still have to go to school. And you'll still have your old friends, even if they will be far away. And you'll still be you. Sometimes it helps to start thinking about your new place, with new people and new stuff to do.

Making a Decision

Wow! You're moving! Where are you going? Are you nervous? Scared? Excited? As you've probably figured out by now, you just have to accept the fact that even though you don't want to move, it is something you have to do. But you do have some control of your life. You can either look forward to this move or you can hate it. Guess which one is better? And guess which one will make your life easier?

One suggestion is to start a journal, or just find a clean piece of paper and write down how you are feeling. Once you have your feelings down on paper, you can begin to sort through things much easier. In no time at all, you will feel much better.

Looking Ahead to Move

Now that you know you're moving, it's time to look ahead. Right now you might feel like your life is out of control. And, in a way, it is—you have no control over the fact that you and your family are moving. However, you can do something about it.

You can figure out stuff about your new installation, your new school and get some ideas about how to make friends there. And if you are able to find something fun to do at your new place that you like to do now, well, it won't seem like such a big change after all.

Get out a pencil and some paper. It's time to think like an adult. What do you want to know about this new place? Think of the things you like to do now and the places you like to go. Like soccer. If you play soccer now, you will probably want to know if there are any soccer teams at your new installation. Maybe you could find out if there is a reading club or a club for whatever you're interested in.

If you know before you move that your new place has a karate class or a fun computer center or skating or horseback riding, you'll have something great to look forward to!

Making Memories Before You Move

A thousand years ago, wise men used to say, “carpe diem” (car-pay dee-yum). In English, that means, “seize the day.” For you, that means, “get out and do something!” Go to the mall. Go to the movies. Throw a party. Just get up and do something with your friends.

What do you want to do before you leave? Is there a favorite place you want to visit one last time? Or is there somewhere/something you want to try before you leave? How about just doing some of your favorite things again, like having a sleep over, going to the movies with your friends or playing basketball with your friends? Now is your chance to do it.

Bring your camera and take pictures of everyone and everything you want to remember. Like, your best friend, or the people at the youth center or school. It’s time to make some great memories.

WHAT’S THERE?

So what will there be waiting for you at the new installation? The answer? A lot! This is true for every installation in existence. What do you really want to know about your new installation, school or neighborhood? Take a minute to write down all your questions on a piece of paper. It will help you get prepared, plus you need to have questions in order to find the answers!

This is where we give you ways to find out the answers to your questions about your new place – everything from the town to the weather to the base. It’s like shopping in one of those super-mega stores. A lot of what you want to know we tell you how to find out in this section.

Your New Installation

Before you even move to your new home, you can find out a lot about the base, the school and the community. You need to know your branch of service, such as the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines, and the name of your new installation, or at least the state you’re moving to.

Once you have this information, go onto the internet and type in www.military.com. Enter the name of your military base in the box under “Search Installations”.

As long as you know those two things, you’ll be able to get the information you need about your new installation. This might take you a little while, so be patient. You can always ask someone in your family for help. Once you find your new installation on the web, add that site to your favorites. The next time you want to go back, it’ll be VERY easy to find.

Oh, and remember those questions you wrote down? Once you find an answer to one of your questions, make a check mark by it. That means you’ll be one step closer to everything you want to know about your new place!

Moving to a Foreign Country

If you’re relocating to a foreign country, you have got a distinct advantage: it’s easier being the new kid. When your family is stationed overseas, many other families are moving just

like you, every single year. One teen told us that her school in Japan had more new students each year than they had students returning from the previous year.

So, stop worrying and start exploring. You not only have a new installation and town to discover, you have a whole new country and a whole new continent. Wherever you are, learn about the culture, the people, and the holidays. This is a chance in a lifetime to learn and grow as a person. You can't get this kind of education from a book! You're living it, every day.

Friendships

OK, so how are you doing on that list? Are you getting some answers? Now is the hard part – dealing with the whole issue and new and old friends. You've got to say goodbye to your current friends. Once you get to your new place, you'll have to find all new friends. That's a lot of work, and it's not easy, either, but we know you can do it.

Saying Goodbye

What did you do when one of your friends moved away? Think about it. Did you have a party? Did you hang out at the youth center together? Did you get his address? Did you keep her email? Do you keep in touch? Now, do it for yourself. You and your friends will be really glad you did.

Here's a tip. Start your very own phone book! Get the addresses and phone numbers of all your friends. Before you leave, decide how and when you want to talk to your friends. However you decide to stay in touch, it's important to have your friends' contact information before you leave. Once you move, it will be a lot harder to track it down.

Your New Hangouts

Are you worried about finding other kids or teens to hang out with? They're everywhere – at school, at the youth center, at the park. It's hard, but you've got to try. Try talking first. Try joining groups, clubs or sports teams. Try introducing yourself to other kids or teens everywhere you go. If you try, and you stick to it, you'll soon find that friends can be anywhere you live.

Your New Youth Center

You've probably already been to the youth center at your base. What do you do there? Basketball? Karate? Gymnastics? Chances are your new youth center will have similar things going on. Find out as much info about the youth center as you can. What are the hours? What activities do they have? How many students go there? The youth center is full of fun things to do and a great place to make new friends.

Connecting to Kids Before You Get There

Here's a perfect way for you to meet a new friend and learn all about the youth center, your new school and your new base before you even get there. It's called Youth Sponsorship. Every base should have a youth sponsorship program. All you have to do is ask! Check with the Youth Director at your base now. He or she can help you find the person in charge of the youth sponsorship program. It's easy. They'll help you find someone who you can talk to so you can meet a new friend before you get there!

How does it work? You get paired up with another student your age who lives where you'll be living and goes to the school you'll be going to. Your new friend can tell you what the other students are wearing, what the teachers are like and what fun things are going on. It's that easy!

Keeping Up With Old Friends

You may be wondering what has happened to your old friends. Why aren't they calling or writing as much as you'd like? Feel like you are the one doing all the work? If your friends aren't checking in with you every day, it's totally normal. Everyone gets busy. Just because you might not be hearing from your friends as often as you like, it doesn't mean they have forgotten about you.

Each one of you just needs to set aside even a small amount of time and devote it to **friendship maintenance**, which is whatever you and your friends need to do to stay in regular contact with each other. Start writing, start typing, start dialing. Your old friends want to know what's going on in your life, just as much as you want to tell them. So, share it with them. Besides, aren't you just dying to know what's going on at your old school and in your old neighborhood?

Starting Over

You need a friend. You need someone who is your age, who you can talk to, hang out with and who understands you. Making a friend doesn't happen overnight. It means you have to give something away, like a smile or a compliment. And sometimes you have to be a good listener, like when your friend is upset. It's hard, but that's what friends are all about.

Sometimes it takes a while. But as long as you work at it every day, you'll find that friend you've been hoping for.

Talk: Introduce yourself.

Ask: If the other students are playing basketball after lunch, ask if you can play, too.

Join: Take karate classes, join a team. You know the other students on the soccer team like soccer, too. See? You've already got something in common.

Go: Get yourself down to the Youth Center. There are tons of students there already. They might need another person for their basketball game.

Seek: There are other students who just moved in and are looking for a friend, too!

Your New School

Do you know where you'll be going to school yet? Is it on base or off base? You can find out things like what school is like and what projects the students are doing. The more you know before you get there, the easier this will be.

Ask your mom or dad to check out your school ahead of time, if they can. You'll feel a lot better knowing what the other students are studying, what books they are reading, etc.

Fitting in at School

No matter where you live, you'll still have to go to school. You'll still have homework. You'll still have teachers. And when you change schools, sometimes you might need to work harder to catch up in a class. It's not easy, but it happens. If you are behind, talk to the teacher and ask for help. People like to help and it could be a really huge problem later if you ignore it.

Having Bad Days

Everyone has bad days. It's totally normal. Besides classes, tests, homework, sports and clubs, you've got a ton of other things to think about, too. Like, wanting the other students to like you. Or getting picked on. Or having to stand up for someone else who is getting picked on. That's a lot to handle. But it's a part of life, right? And you can handle it, just like thousands of other students handle it every day.

Got a problem with math? Is something bothering you about a friend? Talk to someone you trust, who won't blab it around. Like your mom or dad, your teacher or your coach. Or how about someone from your church or synagogue? There are lots of people out there who can help. Besides classes, tests, homework, sports and clubs, you've got a ton of other things to think about.

Homework Help

So, you're sitting in your classroom. The teacher is writing stuff on the board and you get it. You totally get what she's saying. Then you get home. You have a snack, watch some TV and then start your homework. Uh oh. What happened? It made sense before, but it doesn't make sense now.

There are tons of places on the internet that can help you get your homework done. Go to a search, like Yahoo! or Google, and type in the subject you're having trouble with. You should get a list of sites that can help. And hopefully, you'll be able to walk back into your classroom tomorrow with your head held high. And don't forget, calling a friend from your class can be a big help, too.

Everybody forgets things. So carry a small calendar or notebook in your backpack. Write down all the things you need to do. Like, the story you need to write for English class. Or that math quiz you have on Tuesday. Or the assignment you just got for the science fair. Or your Boys and Girls Club meeting. Even if it's something that'll happen next month, write it down, so you'll think about it. It will help you stay organized and keep you on top of things and help keep stress down so you have less to worry about at a time when you already have lots of stuff to worry about!

HOW TO MOVE

Is this your first move? Or your fourth? Are you moving to another city, a new state, or a new country? No matter where you are going, the most important stuff goes with you, like, your family, your toys, your clothes and your pets. And since your family is moving with you, your new home will be a lot like your old home, because it's got the exact same people and most of the exact same stuff as before.

Moving the Family

It takes a lot of hard work to pack up an entire house and move from one place to another. Your mom and dad have a lot to think about these days. Besides moving, they also have to decide where you're going to live, where you'll go to school and how your family is going to get there. That's a lot of stuff.

And remember: you are all going through the same thing right now. You are all moving. That's hard, whether you are the mom, the dad or the kid. So, be nice to each other. And try to help out whenever you can. Ask your mom or dad what you can do to help. It could be as simple as watching your little brother or sister so the packers can clean out the closet. Or maybe you can help organize all the videos. Or maybe you can help by learning all about your new place (that's why you're here, right?).

Packing Up Your Pet

Don't forget about Fido and Fluffy! You love your pet. That's why it's really important for you to think about how this move will affect your pet. Are you driving across the country? Or flying overseas? Will Fido be able to live with you in your new place?

You'll need your parent's help on this. You and your parent will have to decide how to get Fido and Fluffy through your move. First, your pet needs to see the vet. The vet can give your pet a checkup and make sure it is ready to handle the stress of moving. The vet can help explain what you need to do to move your pet.

If you are moving overseas, ask your parent to find out about the country's pet restrictions. Make sure you have a cage or crate that you can use to send your pet overseas.

If Fido or Fluffy can't come with you for any reason, your family will need to decide where he will go. Maybe a family member can take him. Or maybe one of your friends will keep him until you come back to the States, or maybe you'll have to give him up for adoption. It's sad. But if he has a good home, you know he will be okay.

Packing Up Your Memories

Too bad you can't pack up your friends and take them with you, right? You can't put them in a box or hide them in your car, but you can take them with you in other ways. Like in your phone book, or in a photo album or a diary. As long as you are thinking about them, your friends are right there with you. You can't put them in a box or hide them in your car, but you can take your friends with you in other ways.

Try to keep your favorite memories with you. If you have a favorite photo album or a goodbye present from your best friend, maybe you can keep that with you in the car. It'll help you be a little less homesick and may even remind you that you are a great friend.

**We hope every move you and your family
experience is a successful move!**

We here at the Military Family Research Institute want to thank you again for your participation in our Military Families on the Move Survey. We hope that this brochure helps you think about the moving process and everything it means for you and your family. Good luck!

As you and your family prepare to move, the following websites may be helpful to you. The links are organized according to different stages of the moving process. Take a few minutes to check some of these sites out!

Fitting In Outside of the U.S.

Kinds Information on Deployment

http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/kidslink/grade_select.htm

Third Culture Kids

<http://www.k12teachoverseas.com/html/kids.html>

Overseas Military Communities

<http://www.oconus.com/>

Your New Youth Center

Military Children and Youth

<http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org/MCY/index.htm>

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

<http://www.bgca.org/>

YOUR NEW SCHOOL

Department of Defense Education

<http://www.dodea.edu/data/allsites.cfm>

School Transfer Checklist

<http://www.militarychild.org/Checklist.asp>

Military Student

<http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil/>

Military Child Education Coalition

<http://www.militarychild.org/ARC.asp>

Yahoo! Education: Find Your New School

http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/K_12/Schools/

MOVING YOUR FAMILY

What Kids Who Are Moving Should Do

http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/home_family/moving.html

Moving Your Pet

How to Safely Move Your Pets

http://www.monstermoving.monster.com/Moving_and_Planning/MAP_Article/Your_Pets/

Moving Your Pet

<http://www.atlasworldgroup.com/howto/pets/>

Pets 911 and Pet Adoption

<http://www.1888pets911.org/index.php>

Air Force Crossroads: Pets and Relocation

<http://www.afcrossroads.com/relocation/index.cfm>

Having a Bad Day

Dealing with Feelings

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/>

Dealing with Anger

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/anger.html>

There are many other great sites out there to help you and your family during this time of transition. Take advantage of the websites listed here or go online and find some of the many other sites available.

ADDRESS BOOK

Use this section to collect contact information for your friends before you move. This will make it easier for you to stay in touch after you and your family settle into your new home and new school.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____
E-mail: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: _____
E-mail: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
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