

Countdown to a Hassle-Free Move

by Susan Miller

8 Weeks to Go

- Get a notebook and pen, and start listing. Write down everything you can think of—errands and chores to be done, people and services to contact, items to move and not to move. What will you give away, and what will you sell? Divide your notebook into section headings for easy reference.
- Decide how you will move. Get estimates from movers. Select a company or a mover. Choose a target date.
- Arrange to transfer children's school records. Obtain medical, veterinarian, legal and tax records, as well as eyeglass prescriptions. Ask for referrals.
- Tell your children about the move as soon as you can. The more time they have to think about and prepare for the move, the easier it will be for them. Allow them to express their feelings, fears and doubts.
- Model a positive attitude, no matter how you feel about the move.

6 Weeks to Go

- Measure the furniture, rugs and drapes or curtains you'll be taking. If possible, get the room sizes of your new home (keep all measurements in your notebook). This will help you know what will fit where.
- Purge unwanted items. Involve your children in the process of cleaning out their rooms. Have a garage sale and donate items to charities.
- Create excitement by having kids find trivia about your new town and try to stump each other or by finding one great way that their new city will be different from their current city. End each new city game with a treat.

4 Weeks to Go

- Notify newspaper and magazine subscriptions of your address change.
- Gather boxes and packing supplies. Take a room a day and begin packing seldom-used items. Color code or label boxes for each room and list contents on the side of each box.
- Let your children begin to pack their rooms and label boxes.

3 Weeks to Go

- Contact utility and service companies to set turn-off dates.
- Anticipate pet needs for traveling by car or plane.
- Return library books.
- Make change-of-address labels for family and friends.

2 Weeks to Go

- If you do not have professional movers, start packing what's left in each room, leaving out items you'll need such as clothes, medications, toiletries, bedding and towels. Begin with rooms used less often.
- Begin saying goodbye to those who are important to your family and to places that hold special memories
- Make an effort to spend extra time together and talk about anxious feelings. Perhaps do this as you visit places in your area that you would want to see if you didn't live there.
- Give your children an autograph book for friends to sign or help them create a scrapbook of memories.
- Transfer accounts to a new bank or branch, and notify any creditors of your move.

1 Week to Go

- Give away plants and return rented movies.
- Cancel the newspaper and forward your mail by filling out a change-of-address form at the post office or online at usps.com.
- Let the children fill their own backpacks with snacks, games, books, paper, pens and their favorite blanket or stuffed animal for the trip.
- Pack a "survival box" with things you'll need when you first arrive at your new home—from coffee to soap. Have it loaded last, or carry it with you.
- Set aside jewelry, vital documents, prescriptions and valuables to carry with you.
- Give lots of hugs.
- Pack the kitchen last. Meal time together creates some normalcy during the upheaval of moving.

Moving Day!

- Start the day with prayer.
- Involve your children by giving them small tasks.
- Do a walk-through of your home with the movers to discuss specifics.
- Double check closets, refrigerator, pantry, drawers and shelves to make sure they're empty.
- Leave the house vacuumed and the bathrooms and kitchen clean.
- Remember enthusiasm is contagious—make your move a "big adventure"!

