

Moving with children and pets

Children

- Be excited! Encourage your children to be happy about the move by involving them in the process of buying your new home. Assure them that it will be a positive experience for them.
- Make your children an important part of the moving team by asking for suggestions as to how they can be of assistance.
- Highlight the benefits of your new suburb, eg sporting facilities, better schools, closer to the beach, places of interest etc.
- If moving locally, ask friends or family to care for younger children on moving day.
- Schedule the move to coincide with school terms or school years.
- Help them to create an address book of their friends' contact details so they can stay in touch.
- Give them an opportunity to say good bye to their favourite friends.
- Plan for any special needs of children and pets prior to, during, and after the move, such as medication, food, care or entertainment.
- If moving to a new city, research the local sporting clubs or children's activities, eg Scouts, football or netball clubs.
- Explore the new area as a family as soon as possible.
- Check local schools and child care facilities in the new area. Enquire at day care if baby sitting services are available. Arrange the transfer of your children's school records to the new school. Enquire as to orientation programs for newcomers.
- Ask your children to help pack their favourite toys and assure them that they will be safely delivered to your new home.
- Let your children take a favourite toy with them during the trip.
- Set up the children's bedrooms first to help them to become comfortable. Older children should be encouraged to unpack and sort their personal belongings.
- Encourage your children to suggest how they would like to redecorate their bedrooms.
- Resume your normal routine as soon as possible.

Pets

- Update your pet tags as soon as possible.
- On moving day, confine your pets to an empty room until you are ready to go to keep them relaxed and out of the way. Make sure that they have plenty of toys, food and water.
- Make sure that all veterinary records have been collected.
- If your cat or dog suffers with car sickness, ask your vet for a sedative.
- Make sure your pet has a familiar toy for reassurance during the trip.
- Small animals are best transported in your car in a carrier. Cover the cage with a blanket to avoid stress.
- Transport fish in your car. Place fish in large plastic bags and fill the empty space with air.
- When travelling, stop every couple of hours so that your pet can get some fresh air. Dogs can be put on a leash and exercised. Cats should be provided with a special cat leash and harness. Birds should be fed and watered during stops.
- Do not leave pets in a hot car alone.
- Once moved in, find a room where your cat appears to be comfortable and keep it in that room for a week. Then allow access to the remainder of the house for two weeks before allowing it to roam outside.
- The first time your cat leaves the house, give only a half meal so that they are still hungry and will return for the remainder.
- Birds should be transported by car in their cage. Food and water needs to be removed and the cage should be covered to reduce their stress.
- Don't forget to keep the carton containing the dog's lead, pet food and bowls separate and readily accessible.
- Once in your new home, resume regular feeding and exercise routines as soon as possible.