

MOVING

WITH AUTISM



Relocating With A Child On the Spectrum

At Humboldt, we realize just how stressful a move can be. We also know how challenging this transition can be for a family member who is on the autism spectrum. With a flurry of major changes and disruption of normal routines, relocating will be both scary and exciting. In conjunction with some great organizations, we've put together the following list of ideas and tips to help the entire family feel comfortable throughout the moving process. Although you'll have to create a plan specific to your family member's needs, these ideas can serve as a base.

- In advance of the move find out what community resources and support are available in your new town. Reach out and put things in place to insure a smooth transition after the move.
- Make a positive social story around the move. Be sure to include lots of pictures of the new home and the sights your loved one will encounter in their daily routine. Read it together every day leading up to the move in preparation of this life change.
- Talk about the move often, giving them as much information as you can. Let them know why your move is happening and encourage them to share their feelings so they are invested.
- If your new home is not far away, bring your family member to see it. Nothing is more intimidating than the thought of the unknown.
- Plan simple but special events to mark the occasion, for instance creating a countdown calendar. Motivating activities and positive reinforcement can help alleviate the anxiety around the pending transition.
- Make a "Can't Live Without" list of items that your child is very attached to and should stay close during the move. Separate these items to insure they do not end up in the truck on moving day.
- Include your child in the moving process by having them pack a few of their items in to a special box so they know the items are safe. Decorate the box so it's identifiable and can easily be spotted and opened when you arrive at your new home.
- Try and keep your child's routine as undisrupted as possible. Children on the spectrum thrive on routine and structure. Also try to replicate their room retaining a similar arrangement of the physical environment to the extent possible.

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