

- 20 SCE Schools are used to children joining at different times. Your child's teachers will probably appoint a buddy to show your child around the school and help him/her settle in.
- 21 Explore your new environment together.
- 22 Establish new family routines as quickly as possible.
- 23 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.

Finally, if you are concerned about how your children are responding to the move, talk to the school or contact your local Child Guidance Centre.



Service Families on the Move

Educational Psychology & Child Guidance Service
Service Children's Education



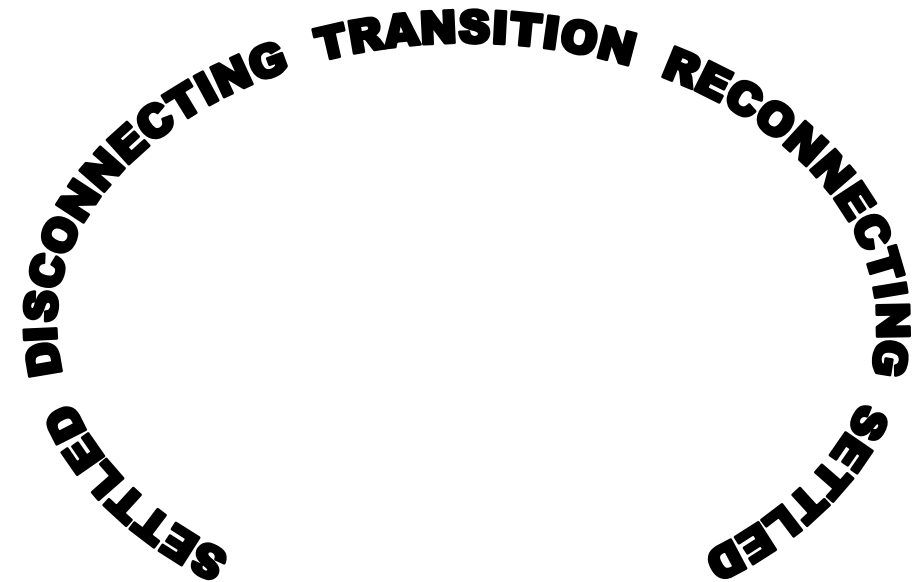
Introduction

All Service families will experience a number of moves during the serving person's career. Many families will move within UK, others will also move overseas, usually for a minimum of 2 years. Moving can either be viewed as a "hassle" of service life 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. Any move will be accompanied by a period of adjustment. The purpose of this leaflet is to help parents to understand the psychological and emotional dimensions of that adjustment so that they can minimise the impact for their children and make the move as positive an experience as possible.

- 10 Think about how to keep in touch with family members and special friends (addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers). Help children to be realistic about this so that they do not promise to keep in touch with too many people and then feel disappointed in themselves when they can't achieve this.
- 11 Help children to gather photographs and souvenirs to remind them of special people and places.
- 12 Try to keep to your usual family routines as much as possible up to the time of the move as this will help children to feel secure.
- 13 Keep a family scrapbook to record things you have done and seen in a particular location.
- 14 Teach children about any different customs that they need to know for their new location.
- 15 Plan visits home and visits from extended family to help maintain a sense of closeness and continuity with significant people.
- 16 If most of your belongings are going into storage, keep out things which will help you to feel at home in your new environment.
- 17 Your school will provide you with a detailed leaving report and will give you your child's school records. Make sure you keep these handy so that you can pass all this information to the new school when you register your child.
- 18 Talk about the move with your children and share your feelings about it.
- 19 When you arrive at your new destination, get your children into school as soon as possible.

- 3 Young children will need something visual, like a calendar, (showing how many sleeps till the move) to help them understand the timescale.
- 4 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.
- 5 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 contact numbers for your new Local Education Authority. They can also provide information about Boarding Schools. (Civ Tel: 0044 1980 618244, Mil Tel: 94344 8244)
- 6 Once you know which school your children will be going to make contact with the school. Try to establish an e-mail pen friend for your children so that they can start to get to know someone in their class prior to the move.
- 7 If you have any choice about the timing of the move, choose to move during the summer holidays so that children will join a new school at the start of the academic year. If this is not possible, move during the Easter or Xmas holidays.
- 8 Help your children to plan their goodbyes:
 - People they wish to visit before moving.
 - Leaving parties.
 - Final visits to favourite places, restaurants.
 - Time to say goodbye to friends and family.
- 9 Help children to "make up" with good friends they may have fallen out with in anticipation of the move. This will enable them to say a proper goodbye to significant friends. It is important to remember the more successfully you leave the easier it is to join in your new place.

The Transition Experience



Settled Period

When a family have been in one place for a while they will usually feel settled and secure. These feelings come from knowing the area and how to get around, having friends and being able to take part in a range of activities. There will usually be feelings of closeness to others and belonging to the community.

Disconnecting Phase

As soon as a family hear that they are posted, they will begin a process of disconnecting from their current location. 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 posting 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 in the year. Family members may begin to feel distanced from their present environment, less of a sense of belonging, possibly less valued.

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 very unsettling, particularly for young children. This period of chaos/disruption may be prolonged if the family have to vacate their quarter 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.

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 a location like Cyprus. 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 feelings 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 children 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 Let your child's school/nursery know when you will be leaving. They will be able to provide ideas about helping your child prepare for the move.