

Moving with teenagers – make it a positive experience

Taking your family out of its comfort zone to move to a new country can present a multitude of stresses. To help ease the impact on teenagers in particular, Crown Relocations offers some essential advice.

The decision to relocate internationally is not easy and when you are taking your family with you, it can become quite complicated. There are few things that impact a family the way a relocation does. Relocating with a teenager can be especially difficult, considering that many teens will view this upheaval as practically earth shattering.

Teenagers find it more difficult to leave home behind

Teenagers will often present a catalogue of reasons and well thought out productions on why the family should not relocate. Their initial reaction is understandable given that most teenagers (unlike younger children) have been building a life for themselves, honing their social skills and making decisions on their own. They have close friendships, school activities, jobs, family ties and, simply put, memories of growing up in a community they call home.

Regardless of your motivation for relocating, it's vital to keep your teenagers involved at every stage. David Muir, CEO of Crown Relocations EMEA division, says that one way of encouraging positive thinking with teenagers is to stimulate some excitement about the destination. "This will involve a lot of research on your behalf as well as family teamwork but it will be worthwhile. Once the work is done, you can highlight the things to be excited about, and the positives about the destination, in family conversations."

Get your teenagers researching the destination online

As parents you can also challenge your teens to become more involved in the moving process by giving them responsibility for specific parts of the relocation. For example, teens are often more computer savvy and conscious of online intricacies, so get them to do the research on a multitude of issues concerning your destination, such as the best neighbourhood in which to buy or rent; driver's license information i.e. what forms to fill out; school systems – which are the highest rated; places to visit; foods to eat; what languages are spoken, plus many other things.

This effort to get your teens involved is simply one step towards a positive outcome. One of the biggest factors in their opinion will be your attitude towards the relocation. "If parents adopt genuine enthusiasm for the change they are about to embark on, they can truly enrich their children's world by supporting them through the rough stages ahead," said Elizabeth Perelstein, President of School Choice International, Inc. "Expatriate children are known to be more self-assured, more adaptable, as well as more open minded."

It may sound obvious but when preparing for the relocation, don't forget to consider what the implications will be for your family as a whole and how each person will feel, especially teenagers. Being fully prepared will help you to support everyone through any difficult times ahead.