

From: Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverychild.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:39 PM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: How to ease the adjustment into a new home



Dear ,

Moving into a new home can be exciting and scary for a child. This transition can be especially stressful if the child is moving out of state, away from their friends, and quite possibly the only state they have ever lived in. There will definitely be an adjustment period when your child moves into your home, and the following are a few ways you can make that transition easier for him/her.

Maintain contact after placement

Continue a child's contact with their foster parents and any other significant relationships they may have developed. You may be afraid that your child will not attach to you if they still have contact with their past caregivers, but cutting them off abruptly is not emotionally healthy. This is especially relevant for older children, who can form strong attachments to the adults in their life. In addition, the child's former foster parent may have some tips and tricks to handling a child's behavior. Talk with your adoption worker and the child's caseworker about the type of contact that the child should maintain with their former foster family and any other significant relationships.

Be prepared for effects on school performance

When a child moves into a new family in a new state, they will also be attending a new school, where they will have to make new friends, adjust to a new schedule and teachers, and learn new school rules. This transition can be hard on a child, especially if they are in middle school or high school. During this time, your child may not be focused entirely on their school work, even if they are a good student. Be patient with your child, and talk to their teachers about their classroom behavior, and come up with a plan to help your child adjust to their new school and succeed academically. Encouraging your child to participate in sports or other activities may relieve some of your child's stress about making new friends, leaving them with the attention to focus on school.

Be understanding of their loyalties

You need to not only help your child understand that he/she may love both you and their former foster parents, but you also need to **let** them. Let your child talk about life with their former foster family, and tell you about their memories with them. Let your child keep a photo of him/her and their foster family in their room, or in a Life Book where they may look at it whenever they want or need to. In doing so, you will be showing your child acceptance, and allow them to bond with your family.

Engage strategies to minimize self-consciousness

As an adopted child in a new school, your child may feel embarrassed or self-conscious about their status. They want to be just like their peers, and abhor being "different". Prepare your child for questions that he/she may get from not only their classmates, but also strangers in public. Coming up with answers that help a child maintain their privacy is key. In addition, work with your child on embracing the fact that they are adopted, and what that means to them.

Source: [Keys to Easing Adjustment](#) from *Adoptive Families*.

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