

Younger children may revert to thumb sucking, bed wetting, crying, forget toilet training, become demanding or throw temper tantrums (so may older ones). Some may talk non-stop, others sulk or worry silently, some cannot sleep and others stop eating.

Children seem to pick up on parental attitudes and feelings by osmosis, so the best thing a parent can do is remain calm and establish new routines as soon as possible. A strong nuclear family is the best environment for a successful move, but that is not to say other stable family configurations cannot provide the necessary security. Most transitional problems disappear after a few months if left to do so. If they do not, seek professional help in the same way you would in Canada.

ii. Older Children and Teens

The social stress experienced by adolescents who must move from their friends is most acute between the ages of 14 and 16. The academic upheaval is greater the closer the student is to completion of high school. Adolescents depend heavily upon their peers and dislike standing out from the group. Their judgement of how green is too green, when a joke is funny and how loud is too loud is based upon group consensus. When removed from their peer group they have all their basis for reaching such decisions removed and they feel bereft of social skills.

It is worth the price of a few phone calls to Canada to allow them to talk to friends at home. This will help them to remember who they are, and make going home easier when the posting is over.

Adolescents are concerned with a search for identity and when their parameters for judgement keep changing, they may experience a lack of self-identity. They may become chameleons, adopting protective colouring in order to fit into their peer group, but lose sight of themselves as an individual.

Because of having to make new friends every few years they may give up and not easily give of themselves and become reluctant to make commitments in a relationship. They will need help in closing the circle of each interrupted relationship.

During the physiological roller coaster years of adolescence, emotions are very intense. Unless teenagers have a positive attitude toward the move, leaving their friends will be a devastating experience, especially if close relationships are involved. In the chaos of moving, it is sometimes difficult to find the time and patience to help our teenagers cope with their fluctuating feelings about the posting.

Between breakfast and dinner one may have to console tears, allay fears, dampen a tantrum, moderate exuberance and explain international law for each teenager involved. It is important to find the time to listen to them. Their feelings deserve consideration, even when they seem