

Start Early!

Pace yourself and your family. From your physical projects such as sorting your belongings, gathering documents, and preparing your home for sale or rental, to the technical such as understanding your allowances and arranging for packers and short-term quarters, to the emotional such as saying good-byes and dealing with family stresses, there's a lot to manage. Make a master list and resolve to tackle a designated number of items every week.

Divide and Conquer

In a family, one person simply cannot take care of everything. But you don't want to step on each other's toes, either. Go through your master list and decide who is best equipped to handle the various tasks.

Simplify

Moving is a great opportunity to sort through your accumulation of belongings. But clearing through the clutter in basements, attics, junk drawers and your child's closet will take time, but it can be emotionally freeing to rid your family of excess. If you have the time and energy, try making a few dollars by selling your belongings on Craigslist or take the quick route and donate your belongings. Don't just plan to throw your excess belongings in storage. Consider whether you'll be excited to unpack your items in question in 3, 6 or 9 years.

Involve the Family

Give your family responsibilities and make them part of the process. Ask your children to sort their toys and find missing game pieces, or review the school artwork to decide what's most special to them. Making your children part of the process will help empower them.

Put Technology to Work

Take digital photos of artwork, scan your important documents and save to thumbdrives, photograph your belongings. Keeping a photobook of your child's artwork can be even more gratifying for your child than having the original stuffed in a box somewhere. Gone are the days of needing extensive filing cabinets. Embrace the change and make it work for you. Set up a Skype, Facetime or other online communication account to help you get in for free with special people in your life.

Anticipate

A lot of anxiety can stem from anticipating the loss of your current living situation (from friends, to school to all the other familiar things in your family's life). Start researching your new post and make a list of things you want to do when you're there. Start trying the food (DC is home to a vast array of ethnic restaurants), learning the language, corresponding with the new school, your Posts' CLO and your new sponsor family. Visit the Overseas Briefing Center (OBC) to view Post videos and resources.