



British Embassy School  
Ankara

## TRANSITION:

Leaving

Bridging

Arriving

Staying Behind

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## LOSSES & TYPICAL REACTIONS

**While moving can be in many ways exciting and positive, it also inevitably entails a sense of loss. What are some of the possible losses?**

- Friends /extended family
- Being seen a certain way
- Knowing how things are done
- For some, family closeness
- Sense of control over one's destiny
- Involvement with certain activities

**What are some ways that children express their feelings of loss/lack of control/fears for the future?**

- May be negative, argumentative, angry and break family rules and expectations
- May become withdrawn, over-sensitive
- May be excessively helpful and obedient, quiet and complacent
- May need more reassurance than usual about all sorts of things; may be clingy
- May regress to earlier behaviours

These are all **normal** responses. However, if your child doesn't acknowledge and process their sense of loss now, more serious consequences can result.

**“Red flags” to watch for (not just regarding the move but also in general)**

- Wanting to be alone, shutting themselves in their rooms for long periods of time, being secretive
- Sudden drop in academic achievement
- Emotional acting out, moodiness, tearfulness, anger
- Any major sleep change - wanting to sleep more than usual or staying up late and not being able to get up in the morning
- Childish behaviour - returning to a previous stage
- More illnesses - colds, headaches or lack of energy
- Accident-prone - including falling or dropping things
- Change in eating habits - particularly in girls
- Lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities, showing no interest in anything
- Inability to get along with members of the family, lack of patience, irritability, resistance to affection and touch
- Lonely and unable to make friends.

## AGE-DIFFERENTIATED ISSUES

While any of these reactions can occur in any age group, they occur with the most frequency in the following age groups:

### **Preschool:**

- Separation worries
- Need for connections
- Need to play a part in the move/responsibilities

- Difficulty in understanding what's really happening

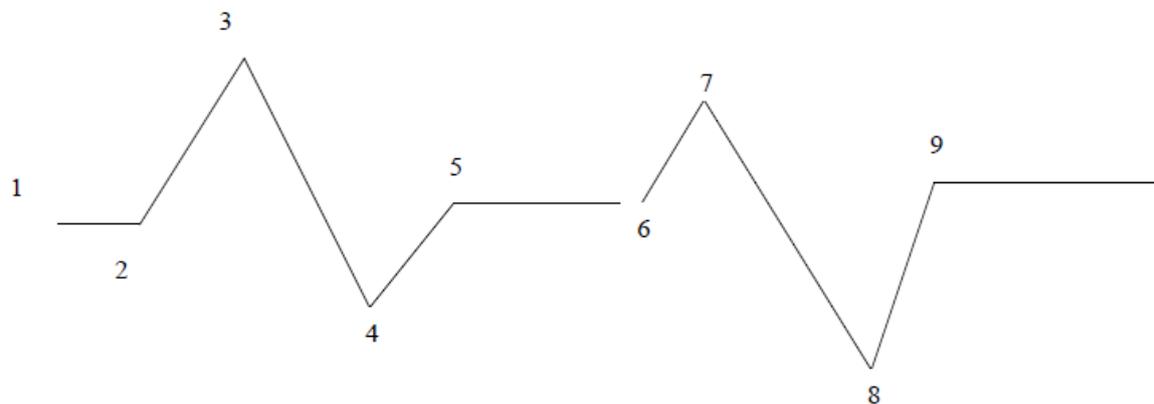
### Primary Age:

- Dislike of change
- Need for security of everyday routines
- Need to know about familiar and/or positive change in new environment

### Secondary school

- Loss of friends and peers
- Concern about fitting in/being accepted
- Loss of control and independence
- Stress of being status-less and unknown
- Stress of not knowing the “ropes”, actual and behavioural

## CULTURE SHOCK AND ADJUSTMENT



## EXPATRIATION 'U' CURVE

**1. Culture of origin.** You're in your own home culture functioning at a normal level of productivity.

**2. Host country.** You arrive in the new country.

**3. Honeymoon.** When arriving in an unfamiliar cultural context, the natural human response is to look for the familiar. Because you find that several things are similar and others are generally extending themselves in welcome, you tend to feel quite good and to function at quite a high level.

**4. Disorientation.** However, as you begin to interact more with the host culture, you start to notice how many things are in fact very different. You start to feel disorientated, tired and bad tempered and as a result begin to judge the host culture negatively. At this stage, your level of functioning drops drastically.

**5. Recovery and Adjustment.** The more that you interact with the host culture, the more you begin to understand it and behave appropriately. You start to feel at home and your level of functioning returns to near normal levels, if not to even higher than normal.

## REPATRIATION 'W' CURVE

**6. Home.** At some point, you return to your culture of origin. This can be to live there again permanently or only for a holiday.

**7. Honeymoon.** Once you are back to where you know how things work without having to think about the cultural implications of every action, you tend to feel very good and to function at a high level of productivity.

**8. Disorientation.** Often quite quickly though, you start to realize how much you and the home country have changed since you were last there. You begin to see the home culture from a different perspective and start to question its values and beliefs. Because this disorientation is unexpected it tends to be a deeper and harder experience than the initial disorientation when moving abroad. As a result, you tend to function at your lowest level during this time.

**9. Adjustment.** As you interact more and more with the home culture, you begin to understand it again and eventually start to adjust. You are able to recognize the good as well as the bad and to find peers who also view the world from a multicultural perspective. You begin to function at a steady level, typically much higher than before you went abroad. Through your experience abroad you have a wider understanding of yourself and the world, and a broader collection of skills and abilities to draw from.

*Based on the work of Gullahom and Gullahom (1963), An Extension of the U-Curve Hypothesis*

## IDEAS TO EASE YOUR TRANSITION

### ***THOSE WHO ARE LEAVING NEED TO BUILD A RAFT***

- R**     **econciliation** – resolve interpersonal conflict
- A**     **ffirmation** – express appreciation of relationships and experiences
- F**     **arewells** – say clear goodbyes to people, pets, place and possessions
- T**     **hink destination** – reality-test expectation

*Based on Pollock, D.C. & Van Reken, R.E.(2001) Third Culture Kids (London: Nicholas Brealey)*

### ***THOSE WHO ARE STAYING NEED A RAKE***

- R**     **econciliation** – resolve interpersonal conflict
- A**     **ffirmation** – express appreciation for relationships and experiences
- K**     **eepest in touch** – with friends who have left
- E**     **xplore** – ways to make new friends

## PRACTICAL IDEAS

### ***BEFORE YOU LEAVE***

- Involve your child in the choice of possible schools
- Encourage your child to help with packing
- Visit the new town and school via the internet, in publications or in person
- Research ways your child can keep up with current interests
- See if the new school can put your child in e-mail contact with a child the same age
- Make a conscious plan to identify and say goodbye to all of the significant people in your child's life
- Make a scrapbook with photographs and memorabilia
- Encourage your child to start a journal of the move
- Give your child's friends new address postcards
- Take a farewell tour of favourite places
- Allow your child to take a few special things on the airplane
- Try to maintain consistent child-rearing and family practices
- Try to keep stable points of reference, e.g. visiting grandparents, holidaying in the same place
- If moving to a new country/culture, research and discuss with your child some of the possible cultural differences

### ***WHEN YOU ARRIVE***

- Provide the opportunity for your child to talk about upsetting feelings
- Take a break from unpacking to explore the neighbourhood together
- Plan future experiences/adventures available in the new place which the family can share together
- Give your child something to do, e.g. unpack a box, clean the windows
- Allow your child to have input into the decoration of his/her bedroom
- Find out where to get familiar things such as foods, magazines, newspapers
- Take photographs to send back to family and friends
- Stay in touch via postcards, telephone or e-mail

- Arrange for visits by old friends
- Encourage your children to bring round any new friends they make to socialize

### ***SCHOOL***

- Make school aware of any health or learning issues.
- Bring all necessary academic and health records and a copy of your child's leaving report.
- See if you can visit the school before the first day to get familiar with the new layout. Find out if your child can meet any teachers.
- Find out day to day organisation such as lunch, P.E. and uniform.
- Make plans for your child to get involved in available activities. If possible, meet up with families in same situation prior to first day.
- Ensure your child takes part in the school orientation program.
- Monitor your child's academic adjustment to catch potential problems before they become overwhelming.

### **THE BRITISH EMBASSY SCHOOL ANKARA ORIENTATION PROGRAM**

Following the principle of involving the whole school environment in the issue of transitions, a proactive group called the Ambassadors Group has been set up. The group is led by a senior teacher and consists of staff, members of the School Council, child volunteers and parents. This group has the responsibility of planning and organising ways to help new and leaving children and their families. The kinds of activities they may be involved in include:

- Contacting new children and their families before they arrive and welcoming them when they begin
- Preparing a "Newcomers and Leavers Board"
- Organising "the buddy system"
- Organising leavers t-shirts
- Fund-raising
- Participating in the Orientation Day activities
- Coordinating with the F.P.T.A. to agree on a yearly sum of money which may be made available for transitions issues.

### **NEW PARENTS WELCOME AND ORIENTATION DAY**

The BESA organises a New Parents Welcome in late August. During this time, the new children will be given a tour of the school, visit their classrooms and meet their "buddy". They will be given the chance to engage in some fun social activities and circle time with each other and their "buddies". There will be snacks and drinks provided in the woods and a chance to learn the school song. These activities are designed to give the new children a chance to get to know each other.

### **NEW ARRIVALS**

On the first day of school, each new child will have a "buddy" who is assigned to take care of them during break and lunchtime and introduce them to other children. Staff will try their best to match each new child by gender, cultural background and interests.

## **NEW PARENTS**

Ongoing support is also given to the parents of new children. When they arrive, they are invited to attend the New Parents Welcome in late August. There are opportunities to meet other parents through the activities of the F.P.T.A. Parents may also find guidance in the Parents section of our website.

## **LEAVING CHILDREN**

It is also important to help children who are leaving to achieve healthy closure. This helps the child's adjustment to the next school environment and provides closure for those friends who are left behind. Wherever possible, a goodbye party will be arranged on the child's last day and the child will be presented with their leavers' t-shirt. A leaver's assembly is also arranged for the last afternoon of school.