

A photograph of a family moving into a new house. A woman in a light blue t-shirt and khaki pants carries a baby in a blue and white striped shirt. A man in a light green t-shirt and blue jeans carries a large cardboard box. A young girl in a pink t-shirt and blue jeans walks towards the camera. In the foreground, there are more cardboard boxes. The background shows a bright, modern interior with large windows.

Move *it*

Shifting into a new house is always a tough job. The stress is multiplied several times over if you have a toddler at hand. M&B promises to make it easier...

BY **ARUNDHATI NATH**

A NEW house brings with it new dreams and aspirations for the family moving in. However, if you are a mum, you may find the whole process emotionally and physically draining. Since packing, moving and unpacking could be tiring and stressful, having a baby to care for is one more thing to worry about. Here's our handy guide to make your moving easier:

TAKE PRECAUTIONS: Packing and unpacking means loads of mess in the Indian context. Neha Chopra, a new mum has recently moved to a new house in Mumbai. She feels that exposure to dust can mean allergic reactions triggered by dust for you and your toddler—sneezing, coughs and cold, red eyes and irritability. “Keep relevant medicines handy and try boosting your and child’s immunity through Vitamin C-rich foods and fruits. Make sure you and your husband take turns taking children out to play in open areas so that they can breathe in fresh air, instead of sitting cooped in front of screens,” says Neha.

ENLIST HELP: “If you have a baby or toddler moving in with you, make sure you enlist help,” says Nanditha Sandeep, who has recently shifted homes with her toddler Sana. Ask a family member or get outside help if necessary to look after the child while you supervise the shifting. Of course, we can not emphasise enough that you must ensure that the help you hire/enlist should be trustworthy. Always—at all times—have someone watch over the child and nanny. It is easy to be distracted while there's so much going on, and this may endanger your child's safety.

STOCK UP ON FOOD: Children are better off when they stick to their routine. It's wise to pack enough food and water for him, and offer it from time to time. Shifting is tiring and you will need time to settle down. So, it is best to plan out meals beforehand.

Treat him to a new toy: In order to keep your little one occupied, you can consider buying him a new toy or board game. This might take his mind off the shifting process, and help him play on

his own when you're busy with the unpacking.

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KEEP HIM INVOLVED: Although a child cannot help much with packing and unpacking, he can be involved in these processes. Talk to your child about the new house and how you plan to decorate it and his new room. Keep him assured that you'll not leave behind any of her favourite toys or clothes.

PACK HIS ROOM LAST: It is preferable to pack the child's room last so that there is least disruption in his play and sleep routines. Ask your packers and movers to unload the carton with the kid's things first at the new house for the same reason. He will immediately

feel comfortable and things would be familiar to him this way.

USE YOUR CREATIVITY: After the packers have emptied the boxes in your new home, don't be in a rush to dispose them off. You can use them to make box forts with your toddler during tea breaks. “The cardboard boxes can keep your child busy for hours, while you get the much-needed time to unpack and settle in, just make sure the scissors and cutters are out of limits! Cardboard play gives your toddler sensorial and free play experience, they can also be up-cycled to make a doll house, play station or anything that tickles your creativity,” Neha says.

CELEBRATE: When you've finally reached the new home, take out a few minutes to celebrate with your toddler. Take her to every room, introduce her to the new place and have her favourite snack to commemorate the shifting.

EXPLORE: After you have unpacked, familiarise kiddo with the surroundings of the new house. This will help him adjust quickly. Look for the nearest playground or children's park and take him there as early as possible. ■

