



Ask BYFS

September 2007

Parent Question: How do I help my child adjust/cope with the impending move away of her best friend?

This is a big deal that we all can remember from our own childhoods. Please acknowledge this so your child knows you understand how he/she is feeling.

There are many ways that you can help your child make this adjustment.

1. Talk with your child about other changes they have experienced. Remind them of changing teachers every year or another move perhaps you or your extended family have made. Ask your child how they got used to a new teacher or a new baby or pet. Acknowledge any good coping skills they mention.
2. Help the children create special "memory" books. Perhaps give them a disposable camera to take pictures of their favorite place and of each other. Give them art supplies to make scrapbooks.
3. If there are ways they can stay in touch - email, snail mail or phone, help them practice these. If there are possible visits planned, write them on the calendar at both houses.
4. Plan a last special activity for the friends to share and use these cameras!
5. During this time, try to arrange a special date with another friend or two who might be staying around. Help your child to get used to playing with different people. This may also be a time to sign up for a new activity - sports, scouts, or art or drama classes.

Suggest that you and your child plan a special event for right after the friend leaves, so your child has something to look forward to. This could be an ice cream cone, a movie or something bigger like a visit to a relative or a family vacation, whatever is comfortable for your family.

Always remember that feeling sad is normal, but that coping with loss is a part of life. Good luck...

This month's column is sponsored by the Eliot counseling staff at Bedford Youth and Family Services (BYFS) Debbie Hardy, Jessica Smith and Lynne Chapas. BYFS is here to support and nurture the social, emotional, and developmental needs of children, youth, adults, and families in Bedford. Email your questions to sueb@town.bedford.ma.us and the BYFS team will choose one to answer next month. Your name and email will remain confidential. Be sure to visit the BYFS website at <http://www.town.bedford.ma.us/youth/youthindex.html>
