

# When Your Child's Best Friend Moves Away

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My best friend moved away during the summer between our 5th and 6th grade years. We were peas in a pod, spent nearly every recess together, and even picked out the same instrument to play in the 5th grade band. Then near the end of the school year I learned she was moving to another state. The most vivid memory of this situation is the bus ride on my first day of 6th grade. Without her. Someone asked me where she was and I think I came unglued, shedding tears of loneliness as I told that kid my best friend had moved away.

Families move for a number of reasons, and it seems to be more common than ever before. Once in a while, the kid that moves out of your school district or neighborhood may be your child's best friend. Not just one of their good friends, but THE best friend. The other pea in their pod.

So what do you do to help? Well, you can't take away their sense of loss, but you can help them with their emotions and keep them connected.

**Reading** – My mom gave me a book called Iggy's House by Judy Blume. There's more to the plot than just this, but I really identified with the main character's sense of loss after her friend moves to another country. Just reading someone else's experience helped me to validate what I was feeling.

**Technology** – I wish I'd had Facebook, video chatting, and email when my friend moved away. While it wouldn't have removed the distance between us, I'm sure that watching her speak and move in real time would have made the separation less difficult.

**Create recordable memories** – My friend and I loved to sing, which means I now have a few very treasured cassette recordings of our voices at age 9 or so. These days, it doesn't take much to make great videos or scrapbooks of time spent together. Just the experience of making these mementos is a great way to just be with each other.

**Social Support** – As the reality of their friend moving sinks in, it's important to help your child stay connected with other friends and family members. They may start feeling lonely and isolated before the move even happens. They need to know that even though their best friend is moving, they have a big support network of people who care about them.

**Your Emotional Support** – During the time between getting the news and even after the move, you may notice some changes with your child. They may appear more moody, isolated, distractible, or even too goofy. They may be

overwhelmed by their feelings or may be trying to distract themselves from reality.

Stay aware of the connection between their loss and their behaviors. Let them know that you understand they are in pain and that you will do whatever you can to help. And if your child wants space to just dwell in their feelings for a while, that's OK too. You don't always have to cheer them up to help them.

As long as your child has healthy coping skills at their disposal, there's nothing wrong with letting them be sad for a while. The freedom to genuinely feel and express emotions can be much more freeing than attempts to appear "pulled together".

In time, things will get better. The sting will soften, they will either find ways to keep in touch or communication will naturally become more sparse. Either way, they will learn to cope with loss while having your support and guidance.

Source: <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/family/2013/04/when-your-childs-best-friend-moves-away/>