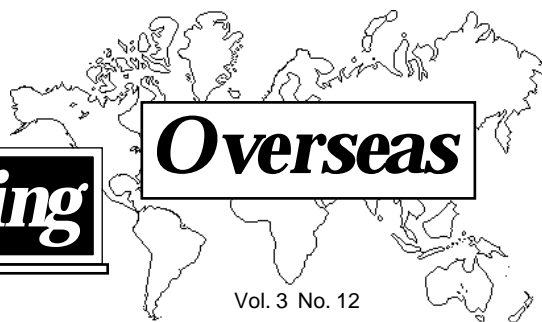


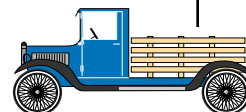
A Publication for SIL Parents Who Teach Their Children

Overseas

Vol. 3 No. 12



# Helping Children with Moves



"I went to thirteen schools in twelve years in four countries on three different continents." Comments like this from adult MKs are not uncommon. Your children's experience may not be this extreme, but moves are probably a fact of life for them, too. Sooner or later most families in ministry overseas wonder how they can help their children with moves.

## Lifelong Learning Skills

The initial tendency is to think mainly in terms of the negative outcomes associated with leaving family and friends and all that is familiar and comfortable in order to go where most people will be strangers and everything will seem so different. But moving can present opportunities to build lifelong learning skills, skills which give individuals the ability to gain from all of life's experiences.

As parents seek to help children with moves, it is good to remember that many of the positive characteristics noted in adult MKs have a direct connection to the fact that during their childhood they moved between several countries and cultures. Flexibility and adaptability, cross-cultural skills, a broad world view, wide range of interests, and the ability to break out of one cultural framework and respond empathetically to another's point-of-view—all can be positive outcomes associated with moving.

It also helps parents to remember that children are resilient—more so than

we may realize. When Mom and Dad convey a positive attitude about moving, coupled with a strong conviction that each family member is an important part of the ministry, then children are better equipped to "take it in stride" and accept moving as part of God's will for their lives.

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## Separation From and Going Toward

The issues in moving can be thought of simply in two areas: "separation from" and "going toward." There are strong feelings associated with being separated from people, places, and things (including pets)—leaving what is familiar and comfortable, loved and enjoyed. Encouraging children to appropriately express these feelings and letting them know that you care and understand will help them deal with the emotional impact of such feelings.

Going toward that which is new, unfamiliar, and strange often generates apprehension, anxiety, even fear. Parents who realize that adjusting to new and different people, places, and things is a significant transitional event for all can do much to prepare their children

to handle the adjustments in a healthy, maturing way.

## Making Change a Positive Experience

Probably the most effective thing you can do for your children is to build a strong and resilient family. With that as a secure base, children are equipped and supported through whatever changes come. In her paper describing "Characteristics of Resilient Families," SIL counselor Larrie Gardner includes the following:

- 1) *Commitment*—to God, to each other, to family responsibilities, and to joyful living
- 2) *Communication*—listening to every family member; openness to discuss anything
- 3) *Coping Skills*—toleration for and acceptance of change
- 4) *External Resources*—the ability to build new friendships and to adjust to new expectations.<sup>1</sup>

A family that is strong in these ways will be able to support children through moves. These families have the best chance of building in their children the healthy characteristics of resilience for life.

## Open, Honest, and Positive Communication

An atmosphere within the home for open, honest, and positive communi-

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<sup>1</sup>Gardner, Laura Mae. "Characteristics of Resilient Families." Counseling Department (WBT, 1989).

**Moves**, continued from page 1

cation may often be the key in helping children with transition. In preparing for a move, ample opportunities should be available for family members to express concerns, fears, and opinions, and share other feelings as well. Some parents may need to focus on their own listening skills, ensuring that they are hearing what is being said and felt beyond mere words. Equally critical is the ability to communicate, not only with words but with gestures and body language, that you understand and support your children through a potentially troubling time.

“Realistic expectations” is key here. Overemphasis of the positive can lead to disillusionment; overemphasis on the negative can blind children to the positives. Children absorb much from the words and feelings expressed by parents. Healthy attitudes toward a move are more likely when parents model a realistic, balanced attitude.

### Learning to Say Good-bye

Healthy people need to learn both to say good-byes *and* to form new attachments. Of course there is grief in saying good-bye, but as one person commented, “If I’m not sad when I’m leaving, maybe it wasn’t worth being here.” Parents can help children learn to say good-byes by acknowledging the sadness as a part of love, by encouraging them to resolve any difficulties in relationships (i.e., asking forgiveness and forgiving others) before leaving, and by making sure they do say good-bye to the people, places, and things they are leaving behind. If appropriate good-byes are not said, it is much more difficult to form new attachments in the next place.

### Planning a Move

Timing is an important part of planning. Of course it is not always possible to plan a move at the ideal time, but when a move *can* be coordinated with school schedules, the transition for school-age children will be easier. Achieving closure in one area (the end

of a school term) helps in adapting to a new cycle elsewhere (the beginning of a new school term).

Preserving is another part of planning. In moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, it is helpful to preserve those things that provide stability and security: continuation of interests and hobbies, access to favorite toys and books, opportunities to communicate with friends in writing or by phone, and continuation of family habits and traditions. Give children the opportunity to participate in this phase of planning by letting them make decisions about what they feel is important.

For adolescents, friends are extremely important. Parents should consider how they can help, such as maintaining or reestablishing contacts from the last furlough. Clothes are also of considerable concern to teenagers, and the in-

***The greatest valuables in life are  
not tangibles but intangibles,  
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not things but relationships,  
not repetition but growth,  
not predictability but purpose.***

vestment in clothing to help them “fit in” appropriately may be a wise one.

You as parents have undoubtedly participated in considerable transcultural training and are familiar with the importance of understanding culture shock. Children often do not have the opportunity for exposure to such training. Wise parents will plan ahead to ensure that their children are given orientation and age-appropriate skills for dealing with a new and unfamiliar culture. Parents need to remember that their children may find the parents’ home culture as unfamiliar as the parents found the host country. The parent’s “home” is not necessarily the kid’s “home.”

Planning ways to maintain good physical and mental health should not be

overlooked. The stresses and fatigue associated with travel and adaptation to new places should be considered in setting schedules, arranging for meals and lodging, and deciding what each child should carry.

### A Sense of Continuity and Mission

The lives of many MKs are testimonies to the fact that families on the move need not result in fragmented or unstable adulthoods for the children in the future. Through all the transitions, dependable constants can give continuity and even provide opportunity for strong bonding within families.

Parents who, in a meaningful way, share with their children their own motivation for ministry establish a purpose that provides continuity through all changes. Parents who

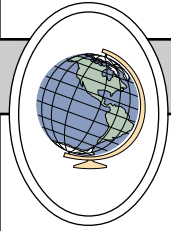
show unconditional love for each other and their children give their family an ongoing gift that bonds them even when change is frequent. Parents who seek to interpret society to

their young children with wisdom and sensitivity can consistently do that wherever transition may take them. As a result, change adds excitement and variety rather than problems.

Fostering a positive thirst for learning can also make transitions an asset. Perhaps it is helpful to realize that the greatest valuables in life are not tangibles but *intangibles*, not houses but *homes*, not things but *relationships*, not repetition but *growth*, not predictability but *purpose*. Fortunately, such intangibles can easily be taken to new locations.

In the final analysis, helping children is a matter of providing consistent teaching of long-term values, conveying positive attitudes, and modeling

**Moves**, continued next page



## Trends Back Home

### The Cultural Literacy Movement

Is there a common core of knowledge that every American should have in order to be culturally literate? E.D. Hirsch, Jr., presented a forceful argument in favor of an affirmative answer in his 1987 book, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Houghton Mifflin, \$16.95).

Professor Hirsch's interest in culture and literacy goes back many years, and he is recognized as the leading expert on the subject. Using examples and anecdotes in *Cultural Literacy*, he painted a picture of decline in literate knowledge among the general population over the past several decades and reported how business leaders lament the lack of communication skills in new employees. He presented evidence from research studies and test results to demonstrate that we cannot take it for granted that a basic level of shared knowledge exists among the populace.

"To be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world," Dr. Hirsch

**Moves**, continued from previous page good parenting skills. With God's help and the support of partners who join parents in praying personally for their children, the challenge of transition can be turned into a blessing.

#### Resources

CHED Family Services has developed a family communication game entitled *TRANSITION IS A FAMILY AFFAIR: Some Ideas for Prompting Discussion Around the Dinner Table*. Activities are designed to help parents and children discuss in a nonthreatening manner feelings about changes and moving. Available from CHED-FS/Dallas.

—CHED Family Services Staff

writes. He suggests that without this common knowledge, members of a society cannot participate in the complex cooperative activities necessary for economic prosperity, social justice, and effective democracy.

#### Understanding, a Key to Reading

This University of Virginia professor theorizes that the failure of our schools to develop satisfactory reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in many of our students has come about because of the lack of emphasis on cultural literacy—that is, on building a common base of information to be learned by all students. According to the author of this book, poor achievement in reading and writing is not primarily due to the lack of skill in decoding words, but in *understanding* words.

Citing research in language development conducted during the past two decades, he presents evidence that background knowledge is of much greater importance for success in reading than previously believed. "What distinguishes good readers from poor ones is simply the possession of a lot of diverse, task-specific information."

#### A Growing Movement

This theme of a "common core" struck a note with many parents and educators throughout the U.S. In the years since the publication of Dr. Hirsch's book, school districts throughout the nation have adopted and implemented the Core Knowledge curriculum being promoted by The Core Knowledge Foundation, begun by Dr. Hirsch and located in Charlottesville, Virginia.<sup>2</sup> In addition to *The Core Knowledge Sequence for Grades 1-6*, a 100-plus-page guide which recommends con-

tent for about 50 percent of a school's curriculum, the organization publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Some educators have been fearful of this trend, suspecting that any attempt to establish a sequence of basic information to be acquired by all students would result in teachers drilling students in rote learning of facts in order to pass a test. This, of course, is a danger with any curriculum—educational leaders must ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to build on the richness of the curriculum rather than "teach to the test."

Proponents of multicultural education cautioned that a common core might fail to address the cultures of a pluralistic society with an ever-increasing ethnic diversity. Proponents of a common core argue that a curriculum formulated on the proper guidelines will lead from a polarized society to a productive and harmonious one. This is an emotionally-charged philosophical and political issue with which school districts are having to deal.

#### Integrated Learning

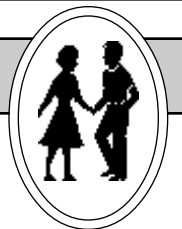
Most districts considering adopting a common core appear to be pursuing an integrated approach rather than teaching knowledge through single disciplines. Traditional subject area lines become blurred when an integrated framework is adopted. For example, a study of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome with the core knowledge agreed upon as important for all students would include history, geography, science, math, music, etc. Reading, writing, listening and speaking—the traditional language arts—are integrated into the theme.

One of the advantages resulting from the adoption of a core knowledge

**Core**, continued on page 6

<sup>2</sup>For examples of school districts using the Core Knowledge curriculum, see May 1993 (Vol. 50, No. 8) *Educational Leadership*. The Core Knowledge Foundation is located at 2012-B Morton Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22901; phone: 1-800-238-3233.

## Especially for Parents



### Helping Children Learn About Finances



A recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* carried the heading, "Filial Finance: Children Have More Money Than Ever, and More Spending Savvy."<sup>1</sup> Quoting statistics from a study by a professor of marketing at Texas A&M University, the article states that preteens in the U.S. "... now have roughly \$14.5 billion in disposable income—an average annual income per kid of \$423—up 70% from the \$8.5 billion in 1989."

In view of the economic downturn of recent years, this finding is surprising. Apparently parents have been shifting more of the family cash and purchasing decisions to their children.

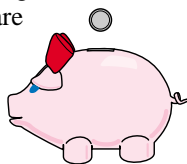
Because most readers of this newsletter are functioning on limited incomes in isolated locations, some might be inclined to conclude that there can be little comparison between their kids and those in a home country. So why should they take time to teach their kids about the value of money and how to use it wisely? Their kids may have little money and little opportunity to spend it!

#### Why Teach Our Kids About Money?

Any number of arguments can be made for including money management as a part of the curriculum. First and foremost are the biblical admonitions about stewardship of financial resources. According to Larry Burkett of Christian Financial Concepts, about two-thirds of the parables Christ used in teaching deal specifically with finances. God's Word is full of teachings about borrowing, lending, sharing and other aspects of handling money.

Public and private educational systems have generally provided very little regarding money and its management. It is parents who need to take the time to teach children fiscal responsibility.

Secondly, most of us know from our own experience that just being told or reading about managing money does not necessarily mean that we apply the necessary discipline in our day-to-day lives. Children need to practice these principles. The only way to do so is to actually manage money, albeit a small amount, and to learn from experience—both positive and negative. Making purchases, budgeting, saving, balancing a checkbook, using credit cards, and even investing are things our children should learn before they leave home.



Larry Burkett, who has counseled hundreds of couples, makes this telling statement: "The toll that worldly financial values place on young families today is enormous. More than one-half of their marriages will fail because of unnecessary financial pressures. The vast majority could be avoided or salvaged if they were taught (early) how to anticipate and avoid these problems."<sup>2</sup>

We live in a world of commerce. Managing financial resources is a basic survival skill.

#### A Proving Ground

Children growing up overseas have unique opportunities to practice the management of money. They often live in rural or isolated areas where

they deal directly with local merchants from an early age. Being sent down the road to buy a few eggs becomes a lesson in bartering and making change. The value of money as an instrument of exchange for tangible items is learned early. Travel provides opportunities to learn about various currencies, exchange rates, high-pressure vendors, and security of valuables.

These same children may not experience the constant bombardment from TV commercials which tends to influence the spending habits of children in much of the Western world. While many consider this a real advantage for raising children in isolated areas, at some point in their lives those children will be subjected to such influences, and they need to be prepared to react in a disciplined manner.

It should also be recognized that because your family may have limited discretionary income, your children may have less access to money of their own than more affluent families in your home country—and thus fewer opportunities to learn by experience. Some families feel that there is just not enough money to go around to provide their children with an allowance, or even an opportunity to earn spending money. However, the *amount* of money entrusted to a child is not the important variable; rather it is the fact that he or she does have the opportunity to make decisions, even if the amount is relatively small.

#### Guidelines for Parents

##### • Positive role modeling

Like most things we try to teach our kids, much of what they learn about managing money they learn from watching us. Children are influenced by how parents discuss finances in their presence, how Dad and Mom share the responsibilities for financial decisions, how they involve children in decision making, and how successful the parents are in applying biblical principles of stewardship.

*Continued next page*

<sup>1</sup>*Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1993, p. D-1.

<sup>2</sup>"Unspoken Witness," *Money Matters*, issue 188, July 15, 1993, p. 6.

*Continued from previous page*

### • Recognizing Personality Styles

In much the same way that a unique learning style influences how a child approaches academic subjects, these same traits and characteristics shape a child's approach to money matters. Some kids are naturally conservative and cautious and hoard their money, while for others money seems to burn a hole in their pocket. Different children need different guidance.

### • Allowing Opportunities to Make Mistakes

While children need guidelines for how they use their allowance, at least some money needs to be given to them unconditionally. That is, after teaching about tithing, saving for a rainy day, impulsive buying, unscrupulous salesmen, etc., parents should allow children to make decisions about when and how they spend at least some of their allowance or earnings, and then to live with the consequences. Some of their decisions may well be wise ones; others may be disasters—but experience is the best teacher.

### • Avoiding a Focus on Materialism

The object of helping children manage money is not to teach them to think materialistically, but to help them become good stewards of what God has entrusted to them. The Bible is replete with teachings to this end. Family devotions, daily Bible readings, as well as specific instruction in God's principles—all provide opportunities to help our children understand and practice these concepts.

### • Giving and Receiving

In some rare instances where the family is dependent upon financial support from others, children may gain an unhealthy attitude that money is always tenuous and in short supply and that financial partners see them as charity cases. In other cases, children grow up with the feeling that someone else owes them a living. Parents should check their own atti-

tudes and by example help children develop gratitude and appreciation.

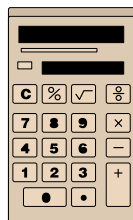
### Tips for Teaching

Preschool children do not have enough concept of future time to encourage them to save. However, they can begin to learn that coins have value and can be exchanged for things and that giving money to others is one way of pleasing God. Counting and classifying coins can be a game and a good readiness skill for more complex understandings later on.



When children are six or seven, they can begin to learn that money is something to be used. This may be the time to start a weekly allowance. The amount need not be large, but enough that the child can learn to decide on a small purchase and perhaps save for a special occasion two or three weeks in the future.

By eight or ten years of age, children may be ready to open a savings account, especially if relatives and friends occasionally send them money, or if they do small jobs at home or around the neighborhood for pay. If a local bank is not available, Mom or Dad may become the banker. In either case, the children need to learn that the bank is paying them to use their money. How to deposit and withdraw money are tasks to be learned.



When children reach the age of eleven or twelve, they should be included in some aspects of planning how the family's money is spent. If not major players in making decisions, at least they should understand that the family has a budget, that money must be saved for paying bills and for future expenses, and that one cannot immediately spend every dollar that comes in. Children of this age should also be

guided in developing and following their own budget.

A good resource for youngsters of junior and senior high age is a workbook developed by Larry Burkett entitled *Surviving the Money Jungle*.<sup>3</sup> This workbook includes thirteen lessons based on Biblical principles for handling money. The practical lessons discuss stewardship, debt, financial honesty, saving, tithing, giving, and other financial concepts of interest to teenagers.

Before children leave home and go away from the direct influence of parents, they need to know how to open and maintain checking and savings accounts, how to apply for and wisely use a credit card, how to budget over a period of months or even years, arrange to pay college tuition, and regularly tithe of their income.



In deciding what to teach your children about managing money, it might be a valuable exercise to sit down with a pad of paper and jot down all that you have to do in order to manage your money. Then make a list of what you have to know in order to do all these things. This could become the basis for the curriculum you use with your children. —Wayne D. Lance

<sup>3</sup>Larry Burkett, *Surviving the Money Jungle* (1990). Christian Financial Concepts, P.O. Box 2377, Gainesville, GA, 30503 USA (\$7.50). Instructor's manual: \$9.50. Overseas SIL members may order from the International Academic Bookstore, Dallas. Those in the U.S. may call 1-800-722-1976 for information and credit card ordering.

### Correction

*Letters Never Sent*, by Ruth Van Reken, mentioned in Oct. *PTO*, is available from:

Letters  
P.O. Box 90084  
Indianapolis, IN 46290-0084  
PH: (317) 251-4933



## Questions Parents Ask

### Reluctance for Group Sports

Most children enjoy sports and enter into games of baseball, soccer, and football with enthusiasm. Some children, however, are reluctant participants and may actually dread the times they are forced to play with a group.

As parents, we need to make provision for any of our children who experience this kind of anxiety. Some of us live in societies where considerable emphasis is placed on sports, and children who do not do well (especially boys) may suffer. There are children who may do well in other school subjects, but perform in physical activities as if they have a learning disability or motor dysfunction.

Think about all the systems of the body which must be functioning in harmony for a child to perform well in the typical physical education activity.



First, the child must focus attention on the person giving directions. He must screen out irrelevant stimuli. Then he must hear words clearly and accurately and use the auditory and visual process channels to make sense out of what he heard and observed.

Before he has processed this information, the ball may be in the air. Now he is expected to track it visually while making a decision about how to respond. He must make allowances for the speed of the ball and decide which direction to move. He must then make the proper movements of hands, arms, legs, and all the rest of his body, to catch or hit the ball and follow through with the proper actions.

If you are a mom or dad who is naturally proficient in sports, you may find it difficult to understand the complexity of thought and action required by your child to accomplish what for you is as simple as walking through a door.

If you have a child who is not especially gifted motorically, here are some suggestions.

- Keep the game fun.
- Keep the period short.
- Do not invite other children to participate during the early stages.
- Do not combine it with your own sports time.
- Be positive, not critical.
- Use foam practice balls, oversize softballs, or smaller basketballs at the beginning; let a little air out of the football.
- When throwing a ball, do not take a big windup or remove the ball from your child's sight.
- Do not ask the child if he knows the rules, especially if other children are around; start each play session with a subtle review of the rules.
- Keep it fun.

#### Core, continued from page 3

curriculum is the specificity of outcomes rather than statements of vague goals and objectives. For example, instead of stating that "first graders will be introduced to map skills," the geography section of the Core Knowledge Sequence specifies that first graders will learn the meaning of *east*, *west*, *north*, and *south* and locate on a map the equator, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the seven continents, the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Central America.<sup>3</sup>

#### Parental Discretion Advised

While cultural literacy materials and the concept of a common core curriculum are appealing for a number of reasons, parents are advised to proceed cautiously before adopting these materials (or any others, for that matter) as their sole

or basic curriculum. Several factors regarding this curriculum should be considered:

- These materials are culturally specific, with a definite United States perspective.
- Information about various religions, including Christianity, may be viewed by some parents as biased.
- Materials are not sequenced according to a sound child development model.
- Activities designed to engage children in *understanding* the information are not included as a part of the curriculum.
- The range of topics can be overwhelming, leading to frustration over what to select and what to leave out, as well as the danger of trying to "cover it all."

Dr. Hirsch has performed a valuable service by presenting a rationale for helping children acquire a common core of information and in actually outlining a model for what might be included. Some parents may find his materials a handy reference as they develop or modify a curriculum suited to the needs of their particular family.

—Wayne D. Lance

<sup>3</sup>E.D. Hirsch, Jr. "The Core Knowledge Curriculum—What's Behind Its Success?" *Educational Leadership*, May 1993, Vol. 50, No. 8, p. 24.