

New State, New School, New Challenges

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When we decided to move from California to Illinois, my first panicked thought was, “What about school for

the kids?!” I felt completely overwhelmed by the idea. How would I support them in a positive way and find educational solutions for each of them? My oldest son is extroverted, very involved in extracurricular activities, and will be a sophomore in high school. He loves his charter school here in California. I currently homeschool my other two daughters under the support of a charter school. I had no clue about homeschooling laws in Illinois. My middle daughter also has an extensive IEP. How would her services transfer in a new state? I spent a few sleepless nights thinking about their unique needs. To be honest, it was less thinking and more like frantic worrying.

One Day at a Time

We are now only a few days away from our big move. At this point in our transition, we have a plan in place for the next school year and I feel more confident. Unfortunately, I don’t have a nicely packaged, “one size

fits all” solution that will work for all families facing a cross-county move. I can only offer this: take deep breaths and move forward every day, even if that means taking baby steps toward a solution. Nothing about my kids’ education for next year came together all at once. I tackled one question at a time, and eventually it all came together. Eventually, I started sleeping better at night.

When to Move

First, we decided on a timeline. Since we had the luxury of choosing when we would move, we decided to wait until the end of the school year. This allowed my kids to be able to finish the year in a familiar place with their friends instead of trying to transition to something new in the middle of the year.

Different New Schools for Different Needs

Once we answered the question of when we would move, I started working on what the new school year would look like. I researched public schools, private school options, and Illinois homeschool laws. I called school districts. I talked to superintendents, principals, and special education directors. My husband and son took a spring break road trip to our new state, so he could tour his new school. I talked to a few parents with kids in local schools to get their perspective and input. One step at a time, we made a plan that worked for our family.

And now, it's time to pack the U-Haul. Deep breaths.
Once box at a time.