

## MOVING IN MID-YEAR OF SCHOOL

Question:

I would like to submit a question with which my wife and myself have been struggling. It is a question that is of the utmost of importance to us as we discuss it on a daily basis. I have been training in the medical field for several years and next December I will, *IY" H*, finish my training. Obviously this will bring a time of great transition and we are trying our best to prepare for it to minimize the impact on our children. Some of the changes include moving, new schools, a new home, and new friends. Our oldest child will be 5 1/2 years old next December. Is it advisable to pick up and move a family in the middle of a school year or is it better to wait until the end of the year while I commute via airplane to my new job, thus leaving my children without a father at home? I must start working immediately after graduation, and am torn between these two options, being an absentee father, or creating an emotional upheaval in the middle of a school year. I would be grateful for any guidance or insight on the subject.

Answer:

The fact that you and your wife have been “struggling with this question” and that you both “discuss it on a daily basis” shows that your personal responsibility for the *chinuch* of your children is uppermost on your agenda. This alone will certainly assure you success as you do not take things for granted by assuming that everything will turn out well by simply following the norms.

I don't believe that “moving, a new school, new home, new friends” is as dramatic a change for a five and a half year old as it is for an older child. I have seen young children move to new communities and, in about ten minutes, form new friendships even though they were quite attached to their previous friends. Of course, intelligent parents would remove all obstacles that the children might possibly encounter and make the move as easy as possible.

The *Torah* prescribes that the father is responsible for his children's *chinuch*. To truly be *mechanech* your children, they must be able to observe you in your capacity as a ‘true blue’ *Yiddishe mentch*. The effect of seeing you make *brochos*, *daven*, hear how you speak to your wife and to your parents, and a myriad of other daily actions, is much more important than the perceived effects of a move in the middle of the school year for a five and a half year old.

An absentee father doesn't necessarily mean being physically away from home. One can be an absentee father while sleeping under the same roof as the family. I would like to paraphrase from the Hebrew, the *Gaon*, Rav Yehudah Silman *Shlita*, *Dayan* in Rav Karelitz's *Beis Din* in Bnei Brak. He says that today's parents have little time for their children. They lack patience towards them. The outcome is that a personal *keshet* does not develop, which is absolutely necessary in order for the children to include their parents in the personal *baayot* (problems) that face them in life. By not having the time or patience for our children, we will see them go to others to solve their problems who will then become their guides.

I think this is one of the biggest *baayot* of our generation in the *chinuch* of our children. Parents hope that the *frum* schools to which they send their children will do the job for them. Almost a century ago, Sara Schenirer wrote that sending children to *chareidi* schools and assuming that everything will turn out fine, is a huge misconception in the *chinuch* of our children.

The more quality time you spend with your children when they are young, the more of a *keshet* you will have with them as they grow older. Quality time includes observation even more than participation. You should, therefore, be home as much as possible, even when your children are at such a young age.

*Gut Shabbos.*