

# How to Support Stayers

## How to support your children (and yourself) as you bid farewell to friends who are transitioning out of Nanjing

The season of farewells is upon us. We mark our calendars with good bye lunches, coffees and parties. We look forward to summer vacation and for some a new adventure in their home country or a new position abroad. The focus tends to be on those who are moving on, but what about the stayers? Jane Barron of Globally Grounded shares six steps towards being a successful Stayer:

1. Feeling Sad is OK – Winnie the Pooh says it best. “How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”
2. Talk or Do – tell a trusted adult or friend how you feel. Hearing your own words can help bring clarity and calm. If verbalizing your feelings is hard, try to express them differently. Write in a journal, draw, compose a song, go for a walk.
3. “Build a RAFT,” says sociologist and author David Pollock:
4. Reconcile any differences you have with The Leavers or The Stayers. Forgive others and ask for forgiveness.
5. Affirm those Leavers and Stayers who are important to you. Write a letter or email, give a gift, say it face-to-face. Create a list of all the things that are still good in your life, even without your friend.

Farewell The Leaver appropriately and the places that are meaningful to you both. This takes time.

Think ahead about how to maintain contact with The Leaver yet remain open to The Arrivers. Create a Hope Calendar, recording events that you are looking forward to in the coming months.

“Move AFT on your RAFT,” says Doug Ota, psychologist and author, by answering the following questions:

Actions – What am I actively doing to say goodbye, connect with others, and get involved?

Feelings – Why do I feel sad to see my friends leave? Do I feel OK about making new friends? How do I feel about my life here?

Thoughts – Am I preparing to see my friends go? Am I ready to make new friends? Do I belong here now? Refer to Step 2 if necessary.

5. Extend Grace – to those leaving, arriving, and staying (including yourself). The process of transition is different for everyone.
6. Open the Gate to your friendship circle – it is possible to make new friends without being disloyal to your old ones.

If you have any concerns or questions please reach out to your divisional school counselor. PS - [calevakelly@nanjing-school.com](mailto:calevakelly@nanjing-school.com), MS - [krisbezzerrides@nanjing-school.com](mailto:krisbezzerrides@nanjing-school.com), US - [gretechengalaty@nanjing-school.com](mailto:gretechengalaty@nanjing-school.com)

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