Most people move out of the family home and set up their own place during their late teens to late 20s. Whether or not this is a smooth transition depends on the reasons for the move and the strength of the family relationships. Listen to your child’s needs and talk to them about your concerns.

Reasons children move out of home
Some of the many reasons why a young person moves out of home include:

- wishing to live independently
- needing to live closer to their place of work or study
- wishing to live with their partner
- escaping conflict at home
- being asked to leave by their parents.

Feelings when children move out of home
It’s normal for parents and carers to experience a range of emotions when their children move out of home. For example, you may feel:

- worried that your child is not able to look after themselves (for example, manage the washing, cooking and bill paying) or make good lifestyle choices
- sad – many parents feel grief when their children move out of home. This is sometimes referred to as empty nest syndrome
- resistant – you may not want your child to move out unless they marry or buy a house. If they want to leave home for other reasons it may cause conflict in the family
- embarrassed – you may fret about what other people may think and assume the worst. For example, you might be afraid that your child is leaving home ‘too soon’ and it will make you look like you are not a good parent.

Suggestions for parents when children want to move out of home
Tips include:

- solve existing problems – if your child wants to leave home because of a fight or other family problems, try your best to find solutions. Seek professional help if necessary. In the meantime, arrange for your child to stay short term with family or friends
- communicate – if you don’t approve of your child’s reasons for moving out, talk to them about it. Listen to your child’s needs and talk to them about your concerns. Understanding each other’s points of view will help
- offer practical help – for example, you could help them draw up a budget, find a place to live, help them move, or give them a few pieces of furniture or household items. These gestures will be appreciated
- keep the channels for future communication open – suggest they come home regularly for family dinners and let them know they can call you anytime
- prepare for a possible return – don’t be too quick to put their old bedroom to another use. They may need to return home once or twice before they finally find their feet
- get involved in other things – if you feel sad and lost without them, actively work on overcoming ‘empty nest syndrome’. Consider returning to work, retraining, travelling, exercising, involving your partner in couple-oriented activities, picking up an old hobby or starting a new one
- talk to someone – talk to a friend who understands what you are going through, or seek professional help from a counsellor.

Where to get help

- Your GP (doctor)
- Counsellor
- Parentline Tel. 13 22 89
- Relationships Australia Tel. 1300 364 277
- Launch Housing Tel 1800 825 955
- Centrelink for crisis and special help Tel. 13 28 50
- Tenants Victoria Tel. (03) 9416 2577

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Reach Out

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