

As we get closer to the end of the year some of us are entering yet another transition period. Since Rosslyn is an international school we have a high number of students leaving at the end of the year compared to other schools. You may be one of those that are planning on leaving Kenya or Rosslyn Academy. Or maybe you were planning on leaving at the end of the year, but due to this year's unforeseen circumstances you left a couple months early. Transition affects each person in a different way, maybe you like to embrace the unknown and the adventure or maybe you struggle with finding a new familiar or new routine. No matter how transition affects you, there are some things that you can do to help yourself and your family transition well into this phase of your life.

There was a model created by David Pollock (author of the book *Third Culture Kids*) that gives us a solid visual on how we can transition well. When we transition we want to picture ourselves building a raft that is made up of four logs. We need to put these logs together in order for our raft to stay afloat and get us to wherever we are going. These four logs represent four different stages of transition: **R**econciliation, **A**ffirmation, **F**arewells, and **T**hink destination. Below each of these stages are explained further and give practical tips on how to help your children and families prepare their "RAFT."

R: Reconciliation means making things right with others, like friends, relatives, teachers, classmates, etc. If we leave without making things right with people then it'll be harder for our RAFT to float, which means it's harder for us when we move. Our RAFT cannot float as well when we are carrying old burdens, tensions, bitterness, and arguments. It's important to apologize and make things right with others either in person, over the phone, or through email. We must forgive others and ask to be forgiven in order to move on in a healthy manner.

A: Affirmation means showing others that you are thankful for who they were to you, whether a friend, mentor, teacher, etc. Before you leave you want to tell or show others how much they meant to you. A good way to do this might be to make them a card, send them an email, or call them on the phone. Tell them how they impacted you, a favorite memory you have them, or why you appreciate them. It is important to acknowledge the good things or the blessings in our lives and express our feelings about these positives. We will also need time to grieve these good things as we leave.

F: Farewells is making sure you say goodbye to special people, places, pets, and possessions. Find times to say goodbye to your friends and people who have meant a lot to you. If you're able too, visit favorite or special places or people for "the last time" to allow children and families that closure. This helps children process the concept of leaving and transition. These "last time" moments may be filled with big emotions for children and that is okay. Allow them to process these emotions and talk about them with you. Allow children to pick out "treasures" to take with them when they leave. These are possessions that have significant meaning to the child and remind them of their time living in a certain place.

T: Think Destination is a stage of preparing and thinking ahead to wherever you're moving. Allow your children to vocalize any questions they are having about what the next place might be like. Give them concrete details of how you will get there and what to expect. Tell them the name of their school, who might pick you up from the airport, what kind of food you will eat, pictures of the house you will live in if possible, etc. The more the children know the smoother the transition will be since they have an idea of what to expect.

When you spend time intentionally guiding your children and families through these different stages then you will be building a strong RAFT to help you reach your next destination. These

different stages are helpful for children and adults to appreciate this part of their life and be able to reflect on it before moving on. Please reach out to any of our counselors if you have any questions about transition or building your RAFT.