

► ORANGE COUNTY'S

10 BEST PLAY-GROUNDS

1. Bluebird Park

798 Blue Bird Canyon Drive,
Laguna Beach

2. Castle Park

4351 Bryan Ave., Irvine

3. Creekside Park

25743 Stonehill Drive, Dana Point

4. Dinosaur Park

25555 Alicia Pkwy., Laguna Hills

5. Founders Park

777 Skyler Way, Brea

6. Fullerton Sports Complex

560 E. Silver Pine St., Fullerton

7. Hurless Barton Park

4601 Casa Loma Ave., Yorba Linda

8. Irvine Terrace Park

721 Evita Drive, Newport Beach

9. North Beach Park in San Clemente

1/4 mile off Avenue Calafia and I-5

10. Tewinkle Park

980 Arlington Drive, Costa Mesa ■

Source: Voted on by local MOMS Clubs



Best friends forever

But what happens if one moves away?

When we returned from vacation, Gabe's cubby was empty, his photo was gone – and so was Gabe. It wasn't the first time a friend moved away, I reminded my son. His eyes widened and his mouth trembled, a sign that tears were on the way.

Adults in an increasingly mobile society know that families move – more than ever in human history, as the experts tell us. But our children are not experts. The friendships that develop from intense, play-filled days are powerful in ways that humble the parent standing by the empty cubby.

Is it possible or desirable to preserve these strong childhood friendships – or is this loss a part of growing up? Today, older children can maintain contact with friends via technology, but young ones are dependent on parents. Experts, such as Dr. Terry Brazelton, suggest that parents need to recognize that children's friendships are especially intense, and when friends move on – either to other towns or even other friends – the children left behind can be devastated. As parents, we need to take such situations seriously.