

Creating Successful TRANSITIONS

For many children, routines and structure are important because they provide a sense of security. For some, even a slight change in a routine, can be very upsetting. For a parent, teacher or educator, preparing a child for a transition and keeping with a consistent routine, will help them cope with upcoming transitions throughout the day.

What is a Transition?

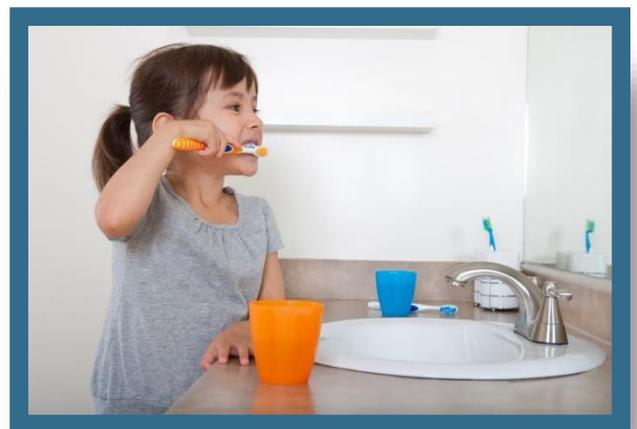
A transition is the 'in between' period of time when individuals move from one activity and/or environment to another. Some examples are, getting ready to leave in the morning, sitting down for a meal or getting ready for bed. While for some, a transition period can be seamless and without upset, for others it can cause stress and anxiety making the transition difficult. Children with developmental disabilities such as: ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Sensory Processing challenges etc. can make the transition even that much more challenging for them.

Why Transitions are Difficult

Children often resist transitions for different reasons. Many need predictability to their day/routine, they crave order or just may want to avoid transitioning to a new activity. Transitions may create challenges in the form of resistance, avoidance, distraction, negotiation, or a full-blown meltdown. After all, transitions often take place when a child is doing something they want to do to, and are required to do something they may not want to do. Children often learn that being resistant successfully delays or avoids a transition and the child will continue to act on those behaviours because, they simply have worked. Evaluating and observing what transitions are challenging can help alleviate some of the difficulties during these transitions. Below are some strategies you can use to support a child that struggles with transitions.

Transition Strategies:

- **Routine-** Keeping a similar routine daily will help support those transitions because of its familiarity. Leaving for childcare at 7:30AM or having dinner at 5:30PM daily, will become the normal schedule that the child will come to know when these transitions are taking place.
- **Timed Reminder-** Let the child know that a transition is coming. Giving a 5-minute reminder before the transition will help the child mentally prepare. For example, brushing teething is coming next.
- **Timer-** Using a timer as a visual or auditory tool will help give a child a reminder that the transition is coming. When the buzzer goes off, begin the transition. When first trying this strategy, you may have to help the child and guide them to the next activity or task.



“Transitions are important to consider because it is often during these times that children lose their focus and become dysregulated. It’s best if the transition period is kept as short as possible, not exceeding 15 minutes.”

References

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www.hanleyfoundation.org/resources/educational-tools/why-do-kids-have-trouble-with-transitions/#:~:text=Difficulty%20with%20transitions%20can%20manifest,being%20overwhelmed%20by%20their%20emotions

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- **Transitional Object-** Using an object that signifies something that is associated with the next transition such as, a cup can help support the child during a transition to a mealtime. After the child plays with the cup for a few minutes, encourage the child to go to the table where the meal will be served.

- **Visual Schedule-** Using photos or pictures to show a child the order of activities that are planned can help them understand what is going to happen next. For example, playtime, clean up, outdoor play, inside, wash hands, lunch.



- **First/Then Language-** Consider using language that promotes first/then when discussing what is coming next. This can be done in combination with a visual schedule. For example, “First we will wash our hands and then we’ll have lunch”. This helps the child understand that a more desirable task is coming once the less desirable task is completed.

- **Fidget Toys-** If a child is finished with an activity but needs to wait for the next activity to begin, playing with a fidget toy such as, a squishy ball, can help the child be occupied for this short period of time. Depending on the situation, a fidget toy that does not make noise may be best to avoid distracting others.



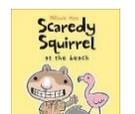
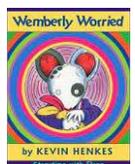
Books to Consider:

Goodbye Friend Hello Friend, by Cori Doerrfeld

Wemberly Worried, by Kevin Henkes

The Kissing Hand, by Audrey Penn

Scaredy Squirrel goes to the Beach, by Melanie Watt



If you require assistance in better supporting your child or children in your program with transitions, please contact your Resource Consultant at Childinü Oxford or by visiting:

<https://childinüoxford.com/about/meet-our-team/>