



Transition Facts for Families

We go through countless transitions in a day. Any time we change what or where we're doing something, or with whom we are engaging we experience a transition. For many adults, transitions are such a natural part of our day we hardly notice them. For our children, transitions can be much more challenging. Some transitions are more difficult than others, especially: Leaving Home or Family, Clean-Up, Leaving a Preferred Activity, Bedtime and Unexpected Changes. Consider the following transition keys to help support your child in these times of change.

- **Keep It Consistent:** When our children struggle, we may be tempted to bargain, give 5 more minutes, or somehow lighten the load. One of the MOST important aspects of successful transitions is that they are consistent. Children (of all ages) thrive on consistency. It helps them to feel safe, secure and connected. Work to develop transitions that occur the same way, and follow the same routine day after day.
- **Make a Plan:** The most successful transitions follow the same planned routine day after day, time after time. Think about a challenging transition at home. Map out each step of the transition and practice it with your child. You may even find that a step by step schedule helps you both remember the routine.
- **Give Warnings:** We often lose track of time when we're very engaged in an activity. The same is true for our children. Use a timer, verbal or visual countdowns to help your child anticipate when it is time to move on to something new. And remember to **Keep it Consistent**, once time is up be ready to help your child move on.
- **Guide Your Child Through the Transition:** In addition to visual supports, be ready to walk your child through new transitions step by step, modeling and describing as you go.
- **Don't Give Up:** It's natural for children to cling to the preferred or familiar and to resist change. By making a plan and following through we help to create routines around our transitions. Routines are hugely supportive for our children, but they take time to be effective. Commit to trying your new transition for at least 2 weeks before you decide whether or not it's working.