

Transitioning Between Activities

Behavior Modification

Transitions can be stressful for children and parents. This can lead to opposition from the child when asked to clean up and transition to the next activity. Below are some strategies to help make your child's transitions easier.

Budget in more time for transitions. Sometimes anticipating that a transition will take longer than you might expect can help to decrease your stress about making it to the next activity on time. This can lower your child's stress.

Be clear about what you want. Children need to know where they should be putting toys away when they are being asked to clean up. They also need to know that if you say they have a certain amount of time left with an activity that really is the amount of time left.

Give specific prompts of upcoming transitions. Let your child know how many minutes or repetitions they have left to complete the activity. This can make transition more concrete to a child. "In 5 minutes we're going to leave the playground," or "You can jump on the trampoline 10 more times and then we will go to the car."

Give different types of prompts for upcoming transitions. Showing pictures to your child of the upcoming activity can help them visualize what is coming next. You can also sing songs about the transition, such as a "Clean Up" song, so they know they must put the current activity away and move to the next. Other auditory warning signs or prompts can also be useful such as using a timer, playing an instrument, or making a silly sound to indicate to your child that it's time to move on.

Let your child pick a transition object. A transition object may be a toy or object that is meaningful to the child from the current activity that they take with them to the next activity to decrease the stress of going between activities.

A visual schedule can help your child know what to expect. Building a visible daily schedule into your child's morning routine can give them a greater sense of predictability and control of the day.

Adapted from: <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Authors: Alyson Jiron, Brooke Brogle & Jill Giacomini

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

Authors: Micki Ostrosky, Hedda Meadan, Greg Cheatham, et. al.

