

TINY BITS (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER) FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
MAY 2021 TINY BIT

HELPING YOUR CHILD TRANSITION SMOOTHLY

Transitioning, or moving to new places, people, and activities, is something adults take for granted. For children, however, transitions may be difficult for many reasons such as when they are tired, hungry, confused or not ready to end an activity. Children also have limited language, social and emotional skills which can cause even more difficulty. When and how often transitions occur are usually decided by an adult, and children may act out with challenging behavior when they feel unable to control their routine. Always consider their needs and abilities and plan accordingly to minimize problems with transitions. When you help your child prepare for transitions you are helping them learn a valuable skill.

Ideas to Try at Home

- **Use a timer, an instrument, or a funny noise to give your child advance warning of an upcoming event.** For example, you could let your toddler bang a pot with a wooden spoon to let the family know it is dinner time.
- **Let your child pick out a special object or toy to transition with to the next activity or place.** You could ask, “Would kitty like to come with us to the grocery store and help us find what is on our list?”
- **Use a visual schedule to show your child the plan for the day.** “First you have school and then we are going to the grocery store.”
- **Make the transition a game or activity where your child can move around.** If possible, let your child think of the game. Ask, “I wonder how we could get to the car today?”
- **Sing songs as you transition.** Children love to hear songs as they move about their day. Make up silly songs together about what you are doing or where you are going.
- **Give your child a job.** Children are more cooperative when they can be part of the process. Perhaps they can help stir something for dinner, unlock with car doors with the remote or pick out a diaper before a diaper change.
- **Do not rush it.** Give lots of extra time to make transitions that are likely to be more difficult for your child.
- **Be prepared.** Have everything ready to transition to the next activity before ending the current one. Have snacks and items to distract them if waiting is involved.
- **Provide praise and rewards for transitions that go well.** Give specific verbal praise about what they did well or give them stickers or points they can use to earn items.
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Excerpted from: [How to Help Your Child Transition Smoothly Between Places and Activities \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/child-development/parenting/transitioning-between-places-and-activities/)

