



Help Your Child Make Smooth Transitions

A transition is a “change.” Transitions can make the day feel smooth and well organized, not rushed and unpleasant. Depending on your child’s temperament, transitions between activities can be easy or more difficult. There are several types of transitions:

1. Transitions between activities (for example, from play time to bedtime.)
2. Transitions between settings (for example, from home to preschool each day.)
3. Transitions between programs (for example, from family child care to preschool.)

Use the following tips to create smooth transitions:

- **Give time.** Allow enough time for children to make gradual transitions. This is the best way to avoid stressful situations.
- **Give advance warning.** Use a timer or give a “5-minute warning” to prepare your child for a change in activity, letting her finish what she was doing, makes it more likely that she’ll cooperate when it’s time to move to the next activity.
- **Show excitement.** Talk about the next activity; be happy and make it sound exciting.
- **Use special rituals.** A book, song, game, or another special custom can help transition a child from one program or staff person to another.
- **Give positive feedback.** Congratulate your child for successful transitions. It will motivate him to feel comfortable with future transitions.
- **Set clear expectations.** Make sure that your child knows exactly what you expect or want her to do during the transition.

Help your child learn good transition skills. Try these activities:

- Have your child put away her toys before moving to the next activity. For example, when your child is finished playing with blocks and wants to draw a picture, tell her the blocks need to be put away, before you’ll get out the drawing materials. Show her where the blocks go and help her put them away.
- Develop a unique way to say good-bye to your child. For example, when dropping your child off at preschool, you might say “see you later alligator” and encourage your child to respond, “after awhile crocodile.”

Book Suggestions

The Kissing Hand. Audrey Penn. Child & Family Press, 1993.

A Kiss Goodbye. Audrey Penn. Tanglewood Press, 2007.