

Visual Schedule – About Those Transitions

Transitions can be especially challenging below is a list Calming Techniques and Transition Strategies for Kids. Try some of these out and see if it helps minimize meltdowns.

Based on Blog post from: The Inspired Tree House <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/transition-strategies-preventing-tantrums-during-daily-routine/>

How Much Longer?

Try using a visual timer. Bring the child's attention to it and remember to count down.

How many more e.g. 10 more pushes on the swing, 3 more turns with the toy.

Update the count or count down - how long the child has left to participate in the activity.

What Comes Next?

Picture schedules are perfect for this. First this.... Then this. Try to alternate between non-preferred and preferred activities so desirable activities can be anticipated.

Avoid last minute changes. Surprises can feel like promises broken.

Changes must be made and can be practiced. One progression of change practice –

1. Easy changes (non-preferred to preferred activities) with lots of notice
2. Easy changes with shorter notice
3. Neutral changes with lots of notice
4. Neutral changes with less notice
5. Challenging changes (preferred to non-preferred activities) with lots of notice
6. Challenging changes with less notice

If a visual schedule is used and needs to be changed. Avoid making changes to schedules outside of child's awareness. When making a necessary change; make it evident, make the reason as clear and simple as possible, and show change being made to the schedule.

Transition Buddies

Use a transition object or toy, bringing a favorite object along for the transition is comforting for a child.

If they're playing with Lego bricks and we have to run to the store – they can bring one Lego guy or vehicle along for the ride. Easy!

Try using a special toy, book, or other object that can be designated for use only on the bus ride to/from school or for some other recognized challenging time of day. Sometimes this is all it takes!

Visual Schedule – About Those Transitions

The Art of Distraction

It's time to go back home, or to leave home for an errand?

Outcome the bubbles! Yep...keep a little container of bubbles in your purse, pocket, or therapy bag and you're in business.

- Can your kiddo stomp bubbles all the way to the car?
- Can they run through the bubbles to get all the way to the therapy room?

Singing also tends to work wonders for distraction during transitions

Try movement activities that get you from point A to point B

- Can we hop all the way to the sink to wash our hands?
- Holding kids under their arms and “jump” them all the way to the bathroom, or wherever else we need to go
- Play catch with a bean bag or bat a balloon back and forth as we move through the hallway.
- Hopscotch style jumps over a stone, stick, block or other object so you and your child can jump over it as you pass by pick it up toss it out and go again.

Sensory “pit stop”

Keep a tactile bin in house and the car - this is a great opportunity for kids to do a little “sensory drive-by.” It can include things like -

- a few resistance bands
- a container of Theraputty –
- jar of beans
- dry erase board to mark on and erase
- sensory balloons (filled with sand, beans, or putty)

Consistent Signals (and maybe a silly signal response)

Sing a consistent song that lets kids know that a change is coming – like a “Clean Up” song or something you have made up together. Call and response style can be helpful and fun.

If leaving from home lights can be turned off or down.

A specific sound bell, clapping pattern, clap and stomp...again involving kiddo(s) in the action can be helpful.

Visual Schedule – About Those Transitions

Ease the Waits

Plan ahead and better yet try to know some options that work for you and keep things handy when waits might occur.

- Waiting song or waiting dance – make this up together for best results.
- Movements and sensory activities from sensory pit stop.
- Fidget toys and simple hands-on tasks (e.g. beads for stringing, adapted books)
- Visual prompts can really help for wait times. Again, a visual timer can work wonders to show that the waiting is almost over! Or try a simple visual cue or sign that says “STOP” or “WAIT”.

Plan to AVOID Rushing

If transitions take time KNOW and this and plan it in. Most transition strategies take time, so take it easy on yourself and your people and give yourselves room. If you have extra time being early causes way less stress than rushing ever will.

Identify Needs for Practice – Celebrate Efforts and Progress

IF certain types of transitions always present a challenge consider making a Social story to explore, better understand, and practice what is going on. Social stories allow kids to mentally “practice” the transition in a calm, non-threatening way. When things are calm try creating the story together in an empowering way. Keep it handy and read – review it when things are calm as practice too.

Patience is key. Kids aren’t going to learn to make new transitions unless they have consistent practice – sometimes for many days (or weeks).

Awareness, Anticipation, and Preparation are Key

Being aware of the flow of your days, which things can happen most predictably, which things can follow a pattern in your schedule. Consistent parts of a schedule (the routine things) provide a framework around the things that we cannot plan.

Anticipating need for new transitions can help us prepare ourselves and our kiddos for something new and different.

If we are Aware and Anticipate challenges, we are better able to Prepare to support calming responses to daily and new transitions.

Visual Schedule – About Those Transitions

TRANSITION STRATEGIES to prevent tantrums



1 MAKE IT CLEAR HOW MUCH LONGER THE ACTIVITY WILL LAST.

Use a visual timer, countdowns, give warnings ahead of time.



2 MAKE SURE THE CHILD UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS COMING NEXT.

Use a picture schedule, alternate between preferred and non-preferred activities, stick to a schedule.



3 USE A TRANSITION OBJECT.

Allow the child to bring a toy along with them.



4 DON'T RUSH IT

Give lots of extra time to make transitions that are likely to be difficult for the child.



5 TAKE A SENSORY BREAK.

When moving from one activity to another, try a movement break on a trampoline or play in a tactile bin, with resistance bands, or theraputty.



6 BE PREPARED!

Structure and consistency are key. Organized materials and clearly defined spaces help too.



7 PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Use social stories and allow for many repeated practice trials!

8 MAKE "WAIT" TIME LESS FRUSTRATING.

Try songs, fidget toys, movement breaks, and timers.



9 PRACTICE THE ART OF DISTRACTION.

Try songs, bubbles, movement activities that will help the child move from point A to point B.

10 HAVE A WAY OF SIGNALING THAT AN ACTIVITY IS OVER.

Turn off the lights, sing a specific song, make sure everything is cleaned up.

