

Some children have difficulty transitioning, whether it's between activities or traveling between locations. As a response, children can manifest undesirable behaviors. Here are a few ideas to try with your child to help with transitions. You can also talk to your therapist to identify which strategies may be the most effective for your child.

Schedules

Schedules can be a great way for a child to visualize upcoming events and activities and can be customized to fit your specific needs. You can create one for an entire day's activities, or for a specific period of time (e.g. morning routine, bedtime routine, etc.).



You can also use two pictures displayed side-by-side to show the order of two activities or events. This can be helpful when trying to transition a child to a non-preferred activity. The child may be more likely to transition if a preferred activity is shown following a non-preferred activity. Make it interactive! Have the child check off the activity when it's complete, or remove the picture and place it in a "finished" bag or box.

Visual Timers

Telling a child they only have "a few more minutes" is an abstract concept. Make the transition easier by showing them! Let them visualize how much time is left by using a timer. When the timer beeps, it's time to move on. If you need something a little more flexible, another strategy is using a visual. Numbered or colored squares are removed one at a time as the transition nears. These squares (or other shapes) can be removed at your own pace. The activity is finished when the final shape is removed, and then it's time to transition. There are numerous products and apps available for visual timers.

Other Tips

- Sing a song or a chant to transition from one activity to another. A "clean up" song is great when a child needs to clean. You can also make up your own!
- Give verbal warnings paired with visuals. If you tell the child, "three more minutes," point to the clock or timer at the same time.
- When giving directions during the transition, give clear 1–2 step directions.
- Positively reinforce a successful transition!
- Arrange schedules to include as few transitions as possible.
- Be consistent! Children are smart and learn from yours words and actions. Follow through with your requests to help the child understand that what you say is what you mean.
- Allow children adequate time to finish activities.
- Don't give up, and know that some transitions are difficult for children.