

Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

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Change can be hard for children and adults

Learning to manage and deal with change can be difficult for both children and adults. Most children experience quite a bit of change in the early years,

everything from child care or preschool to multiple activities throughout the day.

Often, these transitions will go smoothly; however, sometimes children

will exhibit behavior that can be challenging. Keep in mind that many times children have very little input or time to adjust to transitions or changes that may be occurring. Parents can help children navigate through the emotions by providing an opportunity for children to prepare for changes.

Just as for children, parents also need to attend to the emotions they experience when going through a change. Parents can teach children the importance of healthy emotional development by modeling this for children. This will make a lifelong impact.

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Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The *Backpack Connection Series* was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each *Backpack Connection* handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model



The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit challengingbehavior.org.

More Information

For more information about this topic, visit TACSEI's website at www.challengingbehavior.org and type "transition" in the Search Box in the upper-right corner of the screen.



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How to Help Your Child Transition Smoothly Between Places and Activities

Alyson Jiron, Brooke Brogle & Jill Giacomini

Transitioning, or moving, to new places, people and activities is something we do many times during the day. However, change can be overwhelming and seem unpredictable for your child, especially when she is not ready to move on to the next place or activity. Children make many transitions each day—from parents to teachers, from home to car, or from play time to the dinner table, for example. When and how often transitions occur are usually decided by an adult and children often act out with challenging behavior when they feel unable to control their routine. When you help your child prepare for transitions you are helping her to learn a valuable skill. The good news is that you can teach her this important skill while you are enjoying time together.



Try This at Home

- Use a timer, an instrument or a funny noise to give your child advance warning of routine transition events. If possible, ask him to help "alert" everyone to the upcoming event. For example, let your toddler bang a pot with a wooden spoon to let the family know it is time for dinner.
- Let your child pick out a special object or toy to transition with to the next activity or place. "Would kitty like to come with us to the grocery store? I wonder if she could help us find the items 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 take Aunt Rachel's gift to the post office and mail it to her."
- Make the transition a game or activity where the child has the opportunity to move around. "I wonder if today we can use this big shovel to scoop the cars into the bucket while we clean up?" If possible, let him think of the game. "I wonder how we could get to the car today?" You might be surprised at his creativity and how much fun you have roaring like a dinosaur or hopping like a rabbit.
- 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. You are sure to get a laugh and likely a smooth transition.
- Give your child a job. Children are more cooperative when they can be part of the process. Perhaps he can help stir something for dinner, unlock the car doors with the remote or pick out a diaper before a diaper change.



Practice at School

Children transition from one activity to the next throughout their day at preschool. Teachers plan for transitions in advance by creating special routines. These routines help to prepare children for transitions, engage them in the change that is taking place and help them to move smoothly to the next activity. Teachers might use a special instrument or song to let children know it is clean up time. Teachers might read books to the children while they are standing in line waiting for a turn to wash their hands before snack or create an obstacle course or morning routine to help children and parents transition at drop-off. When children are able to participate in or lead the transition, they are excited and eager to move to a new activity.



The Bottom Line

The more a child can predict and participate in the schedule and activities of her day, the less likely it is that challenging behavior will occur and the more likely it is that she will eagerly engage in transitions to new people and places. Taking the time and making the effort to teach her what to expect, when it will happen, and what happens before the transition occurs can be a rewarding experience. Most importantly, it is also an opportunity for quality time that can help lead to smoother transitions.

Choose How You Parent

Article by Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW

Are you concerned about your parenting skills? If so, there are things you can do.

Parenting skills are generally learned through our early life experiences with our own caregivers. The process is called “role modeling”. In most instances the role model is mom and dad, but in many other instances, this could be a grandparent, foster parent, friend of the family or other guardian. Throughout these early life experiences most persons learn healthy and adaptive ways to raise children. However, for some, their own upbringing may have included issues arising out of violence, abuse, neglect or other forms of dysfunction that interfere with their own ability to parent today.

Given poor experiences from one’s past, it can be a challenge for some persons to parent in such a way so as not to re-create the familiar. In other words, it can be difficult to parent differently from how you were parented so what happened to you doesn’t happen to your children. Some persons who have had poor childhood experiences are concerned about their parenting skills. Even some persons with good childhood experiences have concerns too.

The road to better parenting or parenting differently from what you experienced begins with the process of self-discovery. If in your past, you had experiences related to abuse, violence, neglect or other forms of family dysfunction or you are just concerned, consider consulting a social worker or finding books pertaining to your childhood experience to learn how your early experiences can affect adult life and your parenting. Talking with a social worker or reading books helps to hold a mirror to oneself to more fully and deeply examine where we come from to determine who we are and how we act.

With this deeper understanding of our self, we are then better equipped to recognize how what we learned may affect our current parenting behavior. Then we are able to contrast our behavior with what children really need for healthy development. If there is a discrepancy between what we now realize we are doing and what is actually best for children, there are steps we can take to improve matters.

The next steps involve shedding the old patterns of parenting behaviors in favor of adopting new parenting skills. Even though we may not like our past experiences, they are familiar and in a sense, comfortable. As such we need reminders, support and information both for what not to do but also for help with what to do. Strategies to help be a better parent can come in several different forms and include everything from reading books, to notes on the refrigerator door, to counseling, to support groups, to parenting classes.

Along the way, you may want to consider adopting a new role model. If your role models weren’t healthy, think of someone else, whose parenting abilities you admire. This could be a friend’s parent, a fictional character from a book or even a television personality. The objective here is to pick someone who you know parents well. Then, when you are stuck and wonder what to do, you can think of what that person would do in your situation. This is a nice way to take care of yourself and your children.

Choose your role model and how you want to parent to be the kind of parent your child would choose.

*Gary Direnfeld is a child-behavior expert, a social worker, and the author of *Raising Kids Without Raising Cane*. Gary not only helps people get along or feel better about themselves, but also enjoys an extensive career in public speaking. He provides insight on issues ranging from child behavior management and development; to family life; to socially responsible business development.*



We All Help

child & family well-being

“Take Root”

when we all support the
5 Protective Factors

1. Social Connections

Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support

2. Parental Resilience

Tools for managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges and adversity

3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional growth

4. Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to support and services that address immediate family needs and reduce family stress

5. Social & Emotional Competence of Children

Interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize & regulate their emotions, and establish & maintain healthy relationships

through simple **Everyday Actions**

Learn How Today!

Go to www.strengtheningfamilieswv.org