

## Transitions

### Tip Sheet

#### What is it?

Transitions occur when children move or prepare to move from one setting (or activity) to another. Some common transitions include:

- home to preschool,
- preschool to home,
- room to room (e.g., classroom to gym),
- activity to activity (e.g., circle to art),
- surprises (e.g., fire drill), and
- routines (e.g., wash hands before snack).

#### Why is it Important?

Planning for transitions is important because it may help to:

- minimize dysregulation,
- promote consistent approaches,
- minimize disruptions,
- promote independence,
- foster positive relationships/partnerships,
- create predictability and relieve anxiety,
- promote success in further transitions, and
- enhance children's learning.



#### Things to Consider

To ensure successful transitions, it is important to consider the following:

- When should transition planning begin?
- How can the child's routine be structured?
- What strategies or resources are needed to help the child transition?
- Is the presentation of the tool age-appropriate? Can the tool be modified for the child or setting?
- Who will be the point-person to observe the child, arrange for the environment, and gather information?
- How can the family and other staff collaborate in the planning process?
- Does the child need transitional items? Does the item need to be tangible (object) or just a picture?

## How to Facilitate Successful Transitions

1. Identify types of transitions that present challenges for the child.
2. Collaborate with the service providers to identify appropriate and individualized transition tool(s).
3. Be proactive and begin early. Present the tool(s) prior to the challenging transition.
4. Refrain from using verbal reminders during the transition process.
5. Plan ahead on how transition tool(s) will be used and faded.
6. If transition items are being used, have them accessible (e.g., near doorways, on staff, or child). Items that child is already engaged in could also serve as transition items.

## Other Tools and Strategies

- Environmental cues
- First-Then
- Visual schedules/mini-schedules
- Calendars
- Transitional objects/travel cards
- Social scripts/social narratives
- Mentoring/buddy system
- Priming
- Zig-zag visuals – change in routine



## References

- Hodgdon, L.A. (1995). *Visual strategies for improving communication: Practical supports for school and home*. Troy, MI: QuirkRoberts Publishing.
- Hodgdon, L.A. (1999). *Solving behavior problems in autism: Improving communication with visual strategies*. Troy, MI: QuirkRoberts Publishing.