



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

MOVING LIVES FORWARD

ROUTINES AND TRANSITIONS

Routines and transitions are important for children and parents alike. Routines can help children know what is coming next in their schedule, making transitions easier for children and parents. Giving transition times for children will help them go to the next activity with less stress and anxiety. Once routines are in place, transitions become easier for children. Routines offer the chance to build self-confidence, curiosity, social skills, self-control, communication skills, and more.

Sometimes routines are already in place without even acknowledging they are there. For instance, before bedtime, it is time for bath, read a book and then it is bed time. The child knows what comes first and then next which can make bed time easier for some children. At school children might wash their hands first and then have a snack or lunch.

Giving children choices throughout their routines will give them confidence and a sense of control. Simple choices throughout the day can decrease temper tantrums and the amount of "no's" families are seeing and hearing.

Transitions can be difficult for children and families when routines are interrupted with holiday/school breaks, changes within the household and when unexpected things happen throughout the day. Using tools like verbalizing these changes with the child, preparing when you can as much in advance as you can and keeping as many other routines the same are helpful.

SOME WAYS TO HELP WITH TRANSITIONING:

- Get a visual timer to use when its time to move onto a new activity.
 - Remind the child how much time they have left before moving onto the next activity.
 - Tell the child, "First we are going to ____ and then we are going to ____".
 - Praise the child when they have transitioned into a new activity and point out the good things they did while transitioning, "I liked how you put the book away and helped get your pajamas on".
 - Give children choices throughout the routines, "Which book would you like to read tonight", "Would you like to wear the red pajamas or the blue pajamas".
 - Creating a visual schedule with pictures to help the child understand what routine is coming next. If a child has a hard time with the morning routine, you could put pictures of the child during the routines of the morning (i.e. eating breakfast, brushing teeth, getting dressed, getting into the car) and put the pictures in order in a place the child can visually see the schedule or make a book they can take with them.
- Although routines maybe difficult to establish in the beginning, parents and children benefit from routines and more time can be spent doing the actual activities instead of spending time with meltdowns and temper tantrums.

[HTTPS://WWW.ZEROTOTHREE.ORG/RESOURCES/223-CREATING-ROUTINES-FOR-LOVE-AND-LEARNING](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/223-creating-routines-for-love-and-learning)

MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



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Contact your local Centennial Mental Health Center for assistance with any Early Childhood need.

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