



# LOOK Strategies for Families: Planning for Transitions and Routines



## WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Each day we follow **routines** and make **transitions** between activities.

- ◆ **Routines** are *what you do each day and the order you do it in*. Your child might brush their teeth and then read a story as part of their bedtime routine.
- ◆ **Transitions** are *how you move from one activity to the next*. For example, when your child stops playing to get ready for dinner.

Transitions can be difficult for young children. Sometimes they aren't sure what is going to happen next or what they *should* be doing. Keeping steps of routines similar and preparing your child for transitions helps them know what to expect and what to do. This makes the world seem safe and secure. Routines and transitions will look different for each family, child, and situation. This guide provides tips for making routines and transitions run smoothly.



## HOW TO AND TIPS:

### Planning supportive schedules and routines:

- ✓ Try to repeat routines.  
*For example, if you do bath-teeth-book-bed in that order, try to stick to that.*
- ✓ Think about the types and order of activities during your day as you plan.  
*It can be helpful to schedule something your child enjoys after something that is difficult for them. Try to avoid difficult tasks when your child is hungry or tired. Plan for calming activities like reading or singing lullabies before bed.*
- ✓ Make your own picture schedule.  
*For example, pictures showing the steps of a morning routine (getting dressed, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, getting backpack). Use it every day to talk about your expectations and remind your child what to do ("What's next? That's right, it's time for teeth."). Check out this resource for ideas: [https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Routine\\_cards\\_home.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Routine_cards_home.pdf)*

### Getting ready for and supporting your child during transitions:

- ✓ Give warnings or set a timer before moving on to another activity ("It will be time to clean up in five minutes!" or, "We are leaving the park soon. You can choose two more things to do.").
- ✓ Let your child know exactly what you would like them to do in the moment ("Time to clean up. Put the blocks in the bin.").
- ✓ Tell your child what is coming next ("After we clean up the blocks it's time to eat dinner.").
- ✓ Give praise when your child does what you ask ("Thank you for cleaning up your blocks so quickly! Now we're ready to go outside!").



## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

### Transitions and Routines at Home

- ◆ Before it's time to clean up, say, "In five minutes, you will need to put your trains away. Then we will eat lunch. I will let you know when it has been 5 minutes."
- ◆ Help your child pick clothes for school the evening before. Pack lunches and gather school materials in the evening to make the next morning easier.



**LOOK** at you: You are the expert on your child. We'd love to hear from you! Are there routines your child enjoys? What transitions are difficult? Let us know what works well for your family!