



Helping Your Child Meet Your Expectations: Transitions

- So often, we ask children to make transitions (to stop something and to start something else), which can often lead to frustration and anxiety
- Children are learning executive function skills and their brains are still developing, which means that they are learning to control their behavior and to make good choices.
- Things that can make it more likely that your child won't meet your expectations:
 - Tired
 - Hungry
 - Confused
 - Not ready to be done with something
- Preventative strategies
 - Get your child's attention before giving a direction...make sure that you really have it.
 - Clearly word your expectation (as a statement, not a question) so that your child knows exactly what you want him/her to do:
 - Clean up vs. Put your truck on the shelf
 - Get ready vs. Put on your shoes and your jacket
 - Can you clean up now?/Clean up now, ok? vs. Please clean up now
 - Explaining why you need your child to do something can help them to understand the effect that their actions has on themselves and others
 - Please put your truck on the shelf. We want to make sure no one trips and falls, or, by putting your toy back on the shelf you will know where it is the next time you want to play with it.
 - Use a First/Then format
 - First brush your teeth and then we will read your favorite bedtime story
 - First we will go to the store and then we will go to the library
 - Offer two choices (both of which are acceptable to you)
 - Do you want to wear your red shirt or your green shirt
 - Do you want to brush your teeth in three minutes or in five minutes?
 - Turn transitions into games

- Let's fly to the sink like a superhero
 - How many hops do you think it will take to get from your bike into the house
 - Can you finish cleaning up before I finish singing The Ants Go Marching?
 - Give a warning that the transition is coming
 - In five minutes it will be time to clean up
 - In addition to a verbal warning, you can also set a timer
 - Find a natural stopping point related to the activity that your child will need to stop
 - Drive your car around the track three more times and then clean up, please
 - Finish coloring the puppy in your picture and then put away your markers
 - You can add two more Legos to your structure and then please put it on the shelf to finish after we get back from the store
 - Use a special song or sound to signal that it is time to stop an activity
- Teaching
 - Make sure that your child has the skills to do what you are asking of him/her
 - Practice the skills that your child needs
 - Provide descriptive feedback
 - You put on your hat and gloves all by yourself! I can tell that you are ready to go outside now
 - Teach emotion words