



Challenging Behavior Tip Sheet: Changing Activities / Making Transitions

“HELP! My child yells, cries, and throws things when they have to change activities.” Changing activities is also called making transitions.

What you can do:

- Give your child a warning ahead of time that they’ll have to change activities. Set a timer and tell them when the timer beeps, they need to go to the next activity.
- Give a reminder about what comes next — tell the child what he or she can do after they’re finished.
- Just before a transition, give the child a picture or an object representing the activity the child should go to next. The child can even take the picture or object to the next activity.
- Use music and movement to transition. For example, have the child hop or take “giant steps” to the next activity.
- Try to include the child’s favorite activity, toy, or person in a specific activity. For example, if it’s time to go to bed and they love reading books with their dad, you could say, “After you finish your bath time, it will be time to read a book with Daddy!” Or, if it’s time to leave a friend’s house and you have their favorite toy, CD, or book in the car, say, “In 2 minutes, it will be time to leave, and when we get to the car, you get to listen to The Wiggles!”