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Strategies to Help Children With Transitions

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1. Plan ahead: go over the schedule of activities for that day the night beforehand and again that morning. For younger children, you can show them a visual picture schedule or cards of the activities.
2. Use verbal cues that your child can understand. Younger children don't understand abstract time frames like 5 or 10 minutes. Use more concrete references like, "three more times down the slide". Then help your child count, reminding them how many times are left after each turn.
3. Establish and maintain regular schedules and routines at home. When children know what to expect and can anticipate upcoming transitions, they can maintain a sense of organization and order leading to smoother transitions.
4. Provide comfort objects. A child can feel more secure with transitions if he or she can take his or her favorite blanket or stuffed animal with him.
5. Spin the transition positively. Some parents refer to the break in routine as an adventure. The adventure might be a trip to the grocery store where he can push the shopping cart.
6. Use humor! Humor can be magical for transforming a cranky child into a laughing one. Try a silly comment ("You don't want to get into the car? How about we let your baby sister drive? Think she could get us to Grandma's house faster?"). Or you can tickle her by saying, "Maybe the tickle monster has to put your jacket on for you?".
7. Be honest and detailed about what lies ahead. Prepare your child for doctor visits and other potentially unpleasant situations rather than hoping for the best and springing it on him at the last minute. When you can,

familiarize a young child with the situation, such as going on an airplane or going to the dentist.

8. Use a timer! Time is a really abstract concept, so translating it into something visual will help signal that a transition is coming up.

9. Allow for adequate time for children to engage in their preferred activities without interruption.

10. Make up your own transition ritual appropriate for the child's age or occasion. It could include packing up, washing hands, having a drink, singing a song such as, "Go home, go home, now is when we go-o-o home".

11. Bribe them with something they were going to get anyway. For example, "When we go home, you can play with your favorite trucks" or "It is time for an ice cream break or a lollipop".