

TRANSITIONS

Kinds:

1. new grade
2. new teacher
3. new class/group of students
4. new classroom
5. new school (new to Concord) (preschool to K)
6. new lunch/recess time (lunch before/after recess; later lunch)
7. new schedule
8. ½ day vs. full day (k to 1st)
9. switching classes
10. new bus stop
11. new faculty members (new tutors, new sped staff, new teacher, new cafeteria worker, new playground supervisor)
12. new books, supplies, materials
13. new subject matter
14. new locker
15. new backpack
16. new lunch box
17. new bedtime
18. new peer group (friends moved, went to Fenn/private school)
19. others?

Why it's not smooth?

1. Temperament
 - a. some kids transition more easily than others
 - b. quiet, timid student; introverted student)
 - c. difficulty separating
2. Recent changes/adjustments/big events
 - a. death in the family
 - b. divorce
 - c. move to a new home, to Concord
 - d. new baby
 - e. new job
3. Being the 1st child
 - a. school = the unknown
 - b. never seen "school routine"
 - c. don't know what to expect – true of most kids with difficulties
4. No pre-k/daycare experience
5. Learning issues

- a. school is difficult, challenging and overwhelming
 - b. the work is too difficult
6. No predictable answer/reason

How do you know?

1. May be difficult to detect or completely obvious
2. Resistance to going to school
 - a. crying
 - b. saying won't go
 - c. difficulty separating
 - d. won't go on the bus
 - e. apathy about school
 - f. complaints of illness (i.e., headaches, stomachaches) – be sure not really sick!
 - g. Complaints about school itself
3. Regression in developmental behaviors
 - a. old security objects (blankets, sucking thumb, biting finger nails)
 - b. sleeping in parents bed
 - c. clinging behaviors
 - d. baby talk
4. “Just doesn't seem like his/her old self”
 - a. quieter
 - b. withdrawn
 - c. sad, lonesome
5. Homework behaviors
 - a. takes too long
 - b. constant complaints
 - c. doesn't get done

How to help

1. Prepare for the transition
 - a. use simple social stories (describe event – i.e., taking bus, drop off)
 - b. ask what they'll be doing next day, specials, etc.
 - c. talk about the week ahead on Sunday nights
2. Keep a consistent routine
 - a. at bedtime
 - b. afterschool
 - c. Sunday nights
 - d. Mornings
3. Allow child to bring stuffed animal, piece of security blanket, picture of family

4. Reflect child's feelings vs. trying to solve the problem
 - a. "It's hard for you to say goodbye to me in the morning. It's hard for me to say goodbye to you too. Wouldn't it be great if mom/dad didn't have to go to work and you didn't have to go to school and we could spend the day together?"
5. Make goodbyes quick
 - a. DON'T linger
 - b. Usually end up transitioning within seconds to minutes
 - c. Kids = perceptive... if you hesitate, they'll dig their heels in more (i.e., cry more, scream more, budge more)
6. Create transition/separation plan
 - a. use small increments/milestones (i.e., 1st = classroom door, 2nd = at locker, 3rd = end of the hallway, 4th = art room, 5th = main entrance, 6th = flag pole, 7th = taking bus)
 - b. best way to avoid separation difficulties = to take bus! (last step can be following bus if have to)
7. Keep communication lines open with teachers
8. Ask Mental Health Team for support