

Coping
with
change



erikson
center for children and families

Coping with change

How to help your child develop resilience during times of transition

Children do not need protection from challenging feelings—they need help learning how to cope with them, and **extra love and encouragement** while they are processing what is happening around them.

Nine strategies for coping with change

1. Put feelings into words and empathize with your child's feelings. Feeling understood is the most important foundation for adjustment.
2. Do NOT try to talk your child out of difficult feelings. Listen to help your child feel understood, NOT to try to make feelings go away.
3. Break change down into small steps. For example, "We are moving to a new house, but you will still have your same bed, same toys, and ride the same bus to school."
4. Keep consistency when you can, as our brain is wired for order and pattern recognition. Keep the same routines, such as a night time routine.
5. Minimize the number of transitions as much as possible. For example, do not plan a trip right before or after moving to a new house.
6. Prepare your child on what to expect. Draw pictures, show photos, mark a large calendar. Talk about the changes that will happen in very specific and clear details.
7. Give your child an active role in making the transition to the extent possible. Let your child choose clothes for the first day of school, toys to bring along on trip, or food for a friend's goodbye party.
8. Help your child mark the change with goodbye cards, by choosing a gift, or with a special activity.
9. Acknowledge both the sad and positive parts of change. Put into words what you are looking forward to.

If these supports don't seem to be enough for your child during a difficult transition, don't delay in seeking professional help.

Contact Us

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