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KNOW! TO NAVIGATE TIMES OF TRANSITION

The end of spring and the beginning of summer bring about various changes for adults and youth alike. Young children are moving from spending the day at school to spending more time at home; older children are preparing to start middle or high school; recent high school graduates are transitioning into young adulthood; and caring adults are navigating these changes alongside the youth they support. Navigating times of transition can be challenging for young people as they face new experiences and take on new responsibilities. Caring adults can empower young people to embrace changes and take care of their mental health during transitions, even when things get tough. Use the following tips as a guide to help youth in your life navigate through transitions.

MAINTAIN ROUTINES

For many young people, consistency and structure are key components of feeling safe and secure. Big changes can disrupt routines and leave young people feeling anxious. As much as you can, try to establish and maintain predictable routines throughout times of transition. For young children, keeping regular family mealtimes or consistent bedtime routines (i.e. bath, brush teeth, read, lights out) can provide a sense of stability as changes occur. Elementary-age kids can benefit from continuing the habits they established during the school year, such as picking out their outfits the night before or packing part of their lunch. For teens, continuing the hobbies or activities they enjoyed during the school year can help structure their summer and combat summer boredom. [\(1,2,3,4\)](#)

STRENGTHEN CARING RELATIONSHIPS

Young people rely on caring adults to support them through transitions and provide a sense of security and comfort, even when big changes occur. When adults foster positive, trusting relationships with youth, young people feel more connected, accepted, and confident in their ability to handle change. Young people navigate transitions best when adults ask them about their feelings and listen to their concerns, check in with them about their well-being, respond predictably and consistently to their needs, and engage with them in a warm and reassuring way. By maintaining clear lines of communication, you can show the young people in your life that you will be there for them, even as parts of their lives are changing. [\(4,5,6,7,8,9\)](#)

SUPPORT SELF-REGULATION SKILLS

Everyone needs healthy skills that help them regulate their emotions daily. During times of transition, these skills become even more important. Adults can help young people develop a variety of ways to manage their emotions by:

- Making time to experience joy and connection. When times are tough, intentionally taking the time to have fun, even during small moments, can help you feel less stressed and make transitions easier.
- Celebrating young people's past successes. Your young person has likely already experienced a difficult transition and made it through. Help them to remember their ability to navigate tough situations and identify what strategies made it go well last time that they can implement now.
- Modeling healthy coping skills. Practice and share some of your favorite coping strategies. Encourage young people to try out skills like deep breathing, dancing out nervous energy, or squeezing a comfort item. (3,4,7,9)

FOSTER INDEPENDENCE

Big changes are often out of our control, but that doesn't mean we can't find moments of agency and independence during transitions. Help young people take control of certain aspects of their lives by allowing them to choose between multiple activities or involving them in family decision-making processes. For example, you might ask a younger child to choose a game for family game night, pick snacks for the week, or choose a book to read as part of a summer reading challenge. For teens, help them prepare to take on the responsibility for certain day-to-day activities like laundry or budgeting, and encourage them to take initiative in career exploration, planning activities, and learning new skills. As you foster independence, remember to show young people that they are not on their own and that you are there to support them. (4,7)

PREVIEW YOUR SCHEDULE TOGETHER

Knowing what to expect during transitions can help to ease young people's fears and concerns about change. Talk with your young person about what to expect in the days and weeks leading up to summer break. Be specific about what activities and events you have planned and what a normal day might look like for them. Wall calendars displayed in the home or shared digital calendars can be useful visual reminders of upcoming events to prepare for. (1,2)

RESOURCES

[Helping Kids & Teens Cope With Changes & Transitions | Strong4Life](#)

[Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds](#)

[Family Transitions and Routines: Resources - Trying Together](#)



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