

Kid Connects Newsletter: August 2021

Why Do Routines Matter During Transitions?

Zero To Three published an article titled, “Creating Routines for Love and Learning” on February 10, 2010. The article was published over 10 years ago, yet the main premise holds true:

“Routines provide two key ingredients necessary for learning: relationships and repetition.”¹

As we head into August and prepare to return to school with a morning departure from home, arrival time at school, getting to know a new school, teacher, and new classmates, as well as new daily activities it is important to recognize all the changes, unknowns, and new learning patterns that will be encountered for children and families.

How can we successfully navigate these transitions? Stay in relationship and create a predictable pattern to the day. Dr. Becky Bailey, creator of Conscious Discipline states, “The brain is a pattern-seeking device.”² A daily routine supports children in knowing what happens now, what happens next, and what happens when we arrive or depart.



Teachers often create a daily schedule, or visual schedule, so the students have a sense the flow of the day. At home parents can create a morning routine, as well as an after-school calendar or routine. The two key ingredients are relationship and repetition, so discover what works for you classroom, and/or your family, as students adjust to being back in school.

The article contains separate paragraphs discussing routines in relationship to:

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|---------------|--------------------|
| Self-control | Power Struggles |
| Social Skills | Safety |
| Transitions | Parental Happiness |
| Learning | |

¹ Creating routines for love and learning. *ZERO TO THREE*. (n.d.). <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/223-creating-routines-for-love-and-learning>.

² Routines. *ConsciousDiscipline*.(2019,January25).<https://consciousdiscipline.com/freeresources/shubert/mediacenter/routines/>.

Read entire article: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/223-creating-routines-for-love-and-learning>.

Printable resources for creating a visual schedule and a webinar about using visual schedules on the Conscious Discipline website:

<https://consciousdiscipline.com/resources/visual-daily-schedule/>.

Create Your Own Social Story



Social Stories are a great resource for preparing your child for an upcoming transition, such as a new school or new teacher. According to the Center on the Social and Emotional Learning Foundations for Early Learning, social stories can help children manage and understand changes to their routine, social rules, unfamiliar activities, expectations, and social cues. The story becomes a “script” for the child to process new information and feelings, that often result in behavioral challenges. “When children are given information that helps them understand the expectations of a situation, their problem behavior within that situation is reduced or minimized³.” With the new school year approaching a social story could be helpful from the transition from summer to the academic year. They are easy to create!

³The Center on Social and Emotional Learning Foundations for Early Learning. 2021. Retrieved from: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#scriptedstories>

An Easy-To-Follow Guide for Creating Your Own Social Story

Use a Word Document or other Word Processing format: Start to create the story, change fonts, and add the pictures to the document. **Things to include in your Social Story:**

Name the Change: Voicing the change(s) will allow children to know what is coming up next and is an opportunity to discuss, ask questions and adjust to change. “You used to go to this school with Ms. Robin. Now you are going to a new school and your teacher will be Ms. Lou. The classroom will look different with different toys and different friends.”

Name the Feeling: Naming the feeling allows for children to feel understood and heard. It builds awareness of their emotions and promotes regulation of their emotions. “I know that you may have lots of feelings about this change. Maybe you are excited, sad or scared.”

Provide Reassurance: It is important that children are reassured of their safety and who will be caring for them. “Your new school is different, and you will still be safe.”

Name what is consistent: Consistency will help children know what to expect and create more of a sense of control over their choices. “Even though lots of things are different, you will still learn and play at your school. Mommy will drop you off and daddy will pick you up.”

Offer support and skills: Offer ideas for alternative behaviors that are safe and healthy ways to cope with feelings. “If you become upset, you can talk to Ms. Lou, you can take a deep breath and say to yourself, ‘I can do it’ and you can always talk to me.”

Add Pictures that Illustrate the Story: Take pictures to match the story or pull from an image search using real pictures or animated pictures. It helps if the pictures somewhat resemble the child the story is for this allows for them to better visualize themselves in the story.

Some ideas: Write the words of the story on blank pieces of paper and ask the child to draw the pictures. Use the child’s favorite action figures or dolls to act out the story. Take pictures of the child doing various actions in their new routine. Use these pictures to create a visual schedule that represents his/her new routine. Laminating the story makes it more durable and easier to use. Make sure the story is easy to access and read often! Attached Word Document is a template for ideas from www.inclusiveteach.com.⁴

⁴ [Inclusiveteach.com](http://www.inclusiveteach.com). (2019, July 6). Transition: A new class. *Special Education and Inclusive Learning*.
<https://inclusiveteach.com/2019/06/02/transition-to-a-new-class/>.