

STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH *Sensory Challenges*

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SENSORY CHALLENGE: ATTENTION & CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

4. POOR TRANSITIONING BETWEEN TASKS/ACTIVITIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

The Does Your Child? Section offers educational information about characteristics of children with the above mentioned sensory/behavior challenge. Your child may present with one or many of these characteristics.

The Try This! Section offers simple strategies for helping your child cooperate and develop skills. Not all suggestions are appropriate for every child and family. Only use strategies that apply to your child's age, developmental level, and situation. It is suggested to use this checklist while consulting with a professional who has explained and is monitoring these strategies.

>>> DOES YOUR CHILD?

- Show a poor ability to cope with changes that are imposed by adults.
- Find it very difficult to deal with the unexpected, novelty, or changes in routine.
- Experience behavior problems when expected to stop one activity and begin another or move from one place to another place.
- Fixate on one thing for an extended time and be unwilling to change his focus.
- Show a poor ability to stop playing to take turns.

>>> TRY THIS!

KEEP A PREDICTABLE ROUTINE AT HOME:

- Try to keep his/her daily routine predictable. Keep the order of routine consistent (ex: first bath, then toothbrush, then toilet, then book, finally bedtime).
- Use a picture chart of the day's major events/transitions to help him anticipate the sequence of the day. Verbally review it in the morning and occasionally throughout the day.
- Before bed, review the day's events. This will help your child make sense of his world and reinforce order.
- To reduce morning stress, set your child's clothes out the night before.
- To reduce morning stress, ask your child to help select his breakfast food the night before.
- Keep a regular sleep, nap and rest time. Fatigue can quickly decrease a child's ability to cope with changes.
- Provide your child with a pictures of the daily schedule flipping over each card as the activity ends.

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>>> TRY THIS!

PREPARE YOUR CHILD– Prepare your child for upcoming transitions. Try the following:

- Provide at least 2 verbal warnings. For example, “In 5 minutes...”, “In 2 minutes...”. It is not important for them to understand time, but that something is coming up next.
- Use a sand timer to give your child a visual cue as to when to cease participation in the current task and move on to the next task.
- In a warm and re-assuring voice provide a reminder that he will be changing activities soon and “When I count to ten you will put all the books on the shelf.”
- Your child may eagerly move from one place to another if you add some novelty or humor. You may encourage him/her to move in funny manner to get from one place to another. For example: creep like a dog, hop like a bunny, or walk backwards.
- Use the same music or sing the same song as you assist your child through transitions or sequenced tasks.

DEALING WITH EMOTIONS:

- Pair the familiar with the novel. Allow your child to bring a security object to a new place to minimize stress.
- To help your child cope with the emotions he/she may experience when required to deal with transitions, provide your child with the words for his emotions. “I can see by your face that you’re mad.” “Instead of throwing, you can say, I’m mad.”
- Children that have poor tolerance for transitions may not be willing to cease playing to take turns. When he/she is successful, acknowledge it with phrases such as, “I saw that you waited your turn”, “I see you followed the rules”. Be sure to acknowledge the positive behavior, not just praise him/her with “good job.”
- When reacting to your child’s inappropriate behavior try not to display too much emotion. Be sure your facial and verbal reaction matches the situation. For example, don’t smile while you are telling the child to stop a behavior.