

Time of Transition: Strategies for Making Transitions Successful



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Outline

- Common characteristics of individuals with Down syndrome
- What transition is and things to consider
- Strategies for a variety of transitions
- Sharing of resources

Common Characteristics

Strong visual memory

Strengths

- Good at remembering visual data
- “Video-graphic memory”

Challenges

- Slower auditory processing
- Limited sense of time and chronological order
- Memories experienced as if happening now

The “Groove”

Strengths

- Functional
- Can help build routines and healthy habits

Challenges

- Inflexibility

Concrete thinking

Strengths

- Follow instructions

Challenges

- Abstract concepts difficult to grasp
- Take comments literally
- Difficulty generalizing skills across settings

The brain

Strengths

- Provides a unique perspective

Challenges

- Areas of the brain that are impacted are responsible for memory, planning, decision making, problem solving, social behaviors, and attention and language.

Receptive/Expressive Language

Strengths

- Ability to understand what is being asked of them

Challenges

- Difficulty expressing their thoughts
- Slower processing time
- Scripted speech

Common characteristics and transitions

Visual memory

- Strong memory for the way things were before.
- Difficult to pull an individual out of a visual memory to transition.

The "Groove"

- Must complete certain routines.
- Do not like unexpected changes.
- One step or process may lead into another.

Concrete thinking

- Time is abstract.
- Inflexibility.
- Difficulty seeing alternate perspectives/needs of others.

The brain

- Motivation
- Planning/initiation

Language

- Difficulty expressing self may result in maladaptive behaviors.
- Receptive language can cause delays or confusion.
- May give quick or automatic responses that are not accurate.

Transitions



Transition definition

A change or shift from one state, subject, place, etc. to another.

(Merriam Webster)

Difficulty with transitions may look like....

- Refusal
- Ignoring
- Moving at a slow(er) pace
- Yelling
- Crying
- Aggression
- Freezing/shutting down

Things to consider

- Motivation
- Sensory
- Processing time
- Environment (Responses of others)
- Escape/attention/gain something
- Could there be multiple transitions in one event/activity
- Acknowledge feelings and positive strategies to address feelings

Examples of transitions

- New school
- New teacher/staff
- New schedule
- School break
- Moving to a new home
- New job
- New boss/coworker
- Graduation from high school/transition program
- Going to college
- New roommate/housemate
- Siblings going to college/moving
- Daily transitions between activities or locations
- Seasonal changes
- Decreased mobility/functional skills
- Death/loss of person or pet

Scenarios and Strategies

New school

- Visuals
- Tours
- Peer buddies
- Connect with a specific staff member
- Set up for success in the classroom/workspace so routine is established day 1
- Modified schedule to start

New teacher/staff

- Pictures
- Meet and greet
- Build in flexibility with aides or 1:1's in case someone is absent
- Start with appropriate boundaries
- For high school where classes and teachers change frequently acknowledging different rules for different environments
- Former teachers/staff connect with new staff to discuss strategies and preferences

New schedule

- Visuals
- Practice for the change in schedule (wake up at the new time, go to bed earlier, etc)
- Build in breaks
- Try to keep some consistency if needed (peer buddy, same classroom aides, etc)
- When possible, make the change at a time that will make most sense to the individual

School breaks

- Visuals (calendars)
- Maintain consistent sleep/wake schedule
- Academic/learning activities to do over the break
- Keep consistent routines (get dressed every day, do chores, etc)

Moving to a new home

- Create the schedule or routine you want to have in the new space
- Visuals (story about new house and routine)
- Tour new house
- Discuss things that will remain the same
- Give them a choice of bedrooms if possible
- Reason for moving: clean slate with new bedding and furniture etc or same things in the new house. If they want things to remain the same, don't make additional changes. If they want new things, take advantage of that.
- Validate and address feelings

New job

- Check-ins
- Rules and expectations
- Review social skills
- Practice the idea of breaks and lunch time frames beforehand
- Resource review

New boss/co-worker

- Pre-meeting with former boss and new boss
- Keep routines that are working
- Teach/model coping strategies
- Visual schedule

Graduation from high school/transition

- Talk with school staff/case managers about options
- Activities after graduation
- Maintain a consistent sleep/wake schedule
- Opportunities for socialization, learning, movement
- Discuss the changes that happen with friends
- Validate feelings

Going to college

- Be aware of all areas to prep (living on own, class, social, sleep)
- Visuals may work
- Tour the campus
- Map out the daily schedule to ensure it is feasible
- Create rules
- Check-ins with RA or disability resources office
- Consider the best living arrangement options (roommate, dorm, apartment with an aide, home & commute)

New roommate/housemate

- Review resource
- Address the various transitions that are happening
- Work together to establish rules and routines
- Meet in advance and discuss needs and preferences
- Use organizational tools/items to help share spaces

Sibling going to college/moving out or away

- Schedule phone calls or Facetimes or visits
- Identify on calendar when they will be visiting next
- Allowing for involvement like picking out a housewarming gift
- Validate feelings: grief? Jealousy? Frustration?
- Be aware that every time sibling comes home to stay, that is a change to routine

Daily transitions between activities/locations

- Visuals
- Plan (set everything out or up to make initiation easier)
- Give a sense of purpose—an associated task or responsibility
- Timers

Seasonal changes

- Visuals
- Put clothes away from previous season
- Create excitement about the change of season (weather, holidays, activities)
- Engage in activities related to change of season (shopping for new clothes/shoes, home décor, planning desired activities)

Decreased mobility/functional skills

- Build in extra time
- Alter environment
- Provide modifications
- Use adapted equipment as needed

Death/Loss of person or pet

- Begin talking about death before it happens
- Use the real words
- Explain it clearly
- Allow for feelings and the expression of feelings for all family members
- Understand that grief may be delayed
- Provide ways to remember loved one with photos etc
- Model coping strategies
- Plan ahead about how the death may lead to other transitions (change to schedule, routine, living arrangements, etc)

Resources

- [Group home](#)
- [Living with a roommate](#)
- [Grief/loss](#)
- [Visual schedules](#)
- [Staff turnover](#)
- [Life Changes](#)
- [Coping skills](#)
- [Sensory](#)

Resources

All resources

Mental Health Resources

Social Skills Resources

The screenshot shows the website for Advocate Medical Group's Adult Down Syndrome Center. At the top left is the logo and name. To the right is a search bar with the text "I'm looking for..." and a magnifying glass icon, followed by a "MENU" button with a hamburger icon. Below the header is the title "Resource Library | All Resources". The main content area features three large image tiles: the first shows a young woman in a purple shirt, labeled "People with Down Syndrome"; the second shows a woman and a man, labeled "Families & Caregivers"; the third shows a healthcare professional with two patients, labeled "Health Care Professionals". Below these tiles is a horizontal row of five categories, each with an icon and a link: "Events, Classes & Programs" (bell icon, link "See the Schedule"), "Video Gallery" (play button icon, link "View All"), "Related Organizations" (sunburst icon, link "See Listing of Links"), "Projects" (book icon, link "See Our Latest Projects"), and "News" (document icon, link "View News Articles").

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Questions?

Resources:

adsresources.advocatehealth.com

Facebook:

facebook.com/adultdownsyndromecenter

Instagram:

instagram.com/adultdownsyndromecenter

Email newsletter:

eepurl.com/c7uV1v



resources



email newsletter