



## **Wellbeing Support: Managing Transition**

Any transition such as moving house, moving up a school year, changing schools or a new sibling arriving into the family can raise anxieties or cause some degree of emotional regression in children (and adults!).

Here are some tools and strategies to make any transition in your family lives feel more gentle and give you a resilience-giving experience of managing through the time of change.

- Go through with your child everything that will be staying the same. This provides stability amongst the change. You can draw pictures together of everything that is going to remain the same to make this more concrete.
- Create a visual timetable or timeline together so everyone in the family knows what is happening and when. You can include on it what is going to be changing and what is going to be the same.
- Model talking enthusiastically about what will be different with the new change in your child's life.
- It is very important to name and acknowledge any concerns or worries your child has. For more information on this and using an empathic approach to manage anxieties and emotions, please see the handout on 'Managing Anxiety' and 'Encouraging Emotional Expression'.
- Some families find something like a worry jar or worry eating toy helpful. These are not to teach children to disregard and ignore their worries, but instead, they teach children to learn which worries pass with a bit of time and distraction, and which worries need to be discussed in more detail with a grown up they love and trust. Writing their worries down and putting them in a jar helps children get their worries out of their bodies and to externalise them.
- It can be helpful to discuss your child's 'worst fears' about the change in their life. Often their very worst fear is extremely unlikely to happen, but you can then provide reassurance on what would happen if their worst fear does happen. If your child is worrying about something which you cannot control or reassure them about with



certainly, it is helpful for children to hear that they'll always be loved and cared for by their family, no matter what. You can empathise with them about how difficult it is to not know everything that is going to happen in the future, but that they will always be loved and be special.

- Encourage your child to ask questions, but know that it is okay to say “I don’t know” in response. As above, you can offer empathy for how hard it is to not know something. You could make a book or list of questions with your answers on there so your child can revisit it rather than seeking constant reassurance from you (this builds self regulation and resilience).
- You may feel reluctant to engage in conversation about how much your child has loved their life before the change they are about to have to avoid a huge outpouring of emotion. However, making space and time to talk about why your child is anxious about the change and to mourn any losses you are experiencing together will help them process the change and move through the loss into excitement more smoothly. They will need to have their sadness seen before they can start getting excited!
- Having a calm and measured approach to the transition helps build resilience. Resilience only builds in moments of tension! This is a good opportunity to equip your children with the skills they will need to face future moments of uncertainty and change in their lives too. We all struggle with change, but it is a constant of life which provides us with opportunities to grow and find peace and happiness in our lives.

The Young Minds website has a page offering further guidance about transitions and times of change, click [here](#).