



DR. RICK'S TIPS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM TO SUCCEED AT HOME AND SCHOOL - 20 TRANSITION TRICKS

Here's the situation: *It's time for dinner and the child is playing a video game or watching TV. The rule is: At 5:30 it's time to eat. We eat dinner as a family and sit at the dinner table. Here are 20 Transition Tricks you can use to help your child transition.*

1. Most important! **Mirror** back/reflect **feelings** of anxiety, anger, upset, etc. ("You are so mad/sad/frustrated because you don't want to stop watching TV. I know. It's hard.")
2. Philosophy of "Can." **Can he/she understand** the idea of a transition? If so, expect it. If not, lower the bar.
3. Then **give M&Ms**: Meaning and Motivation. Provide **reasons and rules** and discuss the purpose of the change. ("Pretty soon it's time to eat. We eat at 5:30 as a family. It's nice to be together with mommy and daddy and sissy. After dinner you can play even more videogames!")
4. Give **perspective**: Is this really something to get upset about? ("I know you don't want to stop playing your video game but come on. It's not the end of the world! You'll be able to come back and play after dinner.")
5. **No sudden "No!"** Don't stop activities or transition suddenly. Let him/her finish the show or game at good stopping point.
6. Create **structure**: Use calendars (for month and week), schedules (for day), lists (for hour) and sequences (for minute). (Sequence: "Ok. Here's what's going to happen now. You turn off the TV, you come to dinner, you go back and watch TV.")
7. **Desensitize** by successive approximations and repeated exposures. Use countdowns ("TV off in 5 minutes, TV off in 4 minutes," etc.)
8. **Tussle**, negotiate, argue, debate. Get lots of interaction before you transition.
9. **Preview and Review**. Talk about what's going to happen (preview) including feelings: "If you don't stop, then we're going to argue and then you're going to get really mad and have to go to your room.") Then talk about what happened (review): "You see? You stopped TV, had dinner, and now you get to watch TV again. It was good that we didn't fight about it."
10. Keep your **sense of humor** and use humor to defuse tension.
11. **Social stories** and Fables (see Carol Grey). ("Once upon a time there was a boy who didn't want to stop playing videos...")



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12. **Video modeling.** Use a video/smart phone to show dad transitioning successfully. (Dad: "Aw man, I don't want to stop playing, but it's dinner time. And I know the rule: At 5:30 screens off and time to eat with the family. Boy, I'm hungry. And it's fun eating with my family.")
13. **Timing is everything.** Talk about transitions at the right time. Don't talk about dinner right after lunch! Or the dentist appointment two weeks from now!
14. Use a **game or competition** to motivate 'Game show' mode. ("And now, it's time for the dinner game! Who can get to their seat at the dinner table first,
15. me or you?!")
16. Offer **prizes**. Start very big and go smaller, then wean. ("I have a prize for you at the dinner table
17. Have the child **hold a favorite object** during transitions.
18. Put on **sensory blinders** (headphones & hat). This is for transitions to loud, noisy, chaotic environments – like restaurants.
19. **Warnings** to put limits: use the 1-2-3 Magic™ approach. After you've tried all the above and it's still not working, threaten a time out. Rule by the rules not by emotions (see The Good, The Bad, The Ugly)
20. **Time out** or natural consequences. Follow the rules.
21. **Just do it!** ("Look buddy, I've given you every chance, but now it's time. If you don't go to time out on your own, I'm going to have to help you and take you to time out.")