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# Supporting Transitions & Change

Considerations, Strategies and Next Steps

SMCDSB Psychology Department Staff



## Overview

- The impact of transitions and change
- What is good for all
- What is beneficial for some
- What is needed for few
- Supportive next steps
  - Home
  - School Community
- Resources



## The Impact of Transitions and Change - Thoughts

### Child/Teen:

- This is not going to go well
- I get to meet new friends
- None of my friends are going to be there
- No one is going to like me
- It is kind of exciting
- I will not know anyone
- I won't like my new teacher
- I have to learn new places to go
- What if I get lost
- Other students have to go through this too - I am not alone.

### Parent:

- My child will be lost at this new school
- Who is going to take care of my child when they are scared and sad
- I have to build new relationships
- This isn't fair
- This isn't what we wanted
- My child will struggle
- This could be a fresh start for my child
- I have heard good things about this new school
- My kid is not the only one going through this change

### Common Thoughts



## The Impact of Transitions and Change - Feelings

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| • Scared     | • Hopeful    |
| • Mad        | • Fearful    |
| • Angry      | • Alone      |
| • Sad        | • Depressed  |
| • Anxious    | • Glad       |
| • Nervous    | • Relief     |
| • Worried    | • Vulnerable |
| • Grief/loss | • Lost       |
| • Excitement | • Unsure     |
| • Resentful  | • Spiteful   |
| • Curiosity  | • Irritable  |
| • Annoyed    |              |

### Common Feelings



## The Impact of Transitions & Change - Behaviours

- Withdrawn
- Argumentative
- Talking about it alot
- Not talking about it
- Crying
- Tantrums or frequent meltdowns
- Irritability
- Sleep changes (more sleep/less sleep)
- Appetite changes
- Headaches/ Stomach aches
- Clingy



## What is good for all...

### Attend to feelings

- Validate feelings (e.g., " ....")
- Recognize that they are expected and normal in times of transition and change

### Listen to the thoughts

- Reframe thoughts to be helpful/supportive
- Acknowledge any challenges your child identifies and talk with them about the exceptions, hopes, protective factors as well
- Remind child/teen of the changes that they have overcome successfully in the past

### Behaviour is communication

- What is under the behaviour (thoughts and feelings)
- Be aware of your interpretation



## What is beneficial for some...

### Action

- School visits outside of school hours (e.g., play in the school yard, walk around the outside of the school)
- Play about the change of school with younger children

### Information

- Identify specific concerns for your child
- Identify the things that are known (e.g., school, teacher, friends that will be there)
- Different types of information (pictures, documents, school website..)
- Be mindful of timeline for expected communication/information
- Watch for communication from the school and take time to review it

Separate what a child knows vs what they are thinking/feeling

- Remember - thoughts are thoughts not facts!



## What is needed for few...

- Formal transition planning may involve:
  - Parent-student visit to new school / photos of key locations in new school
  - Multi-disciplinary team meetings
  - Formal transition meetings



## Supportive next steps at home

- Be aware of how you talk about this transition around your child (spoken and unspoken messages)
- Be mindful of how you talk to your child about this transition. You have influence over your child's experience.
  - I wonder...
  - What do you think about...
- Remind child of time they have overcome challenges
- Use books, stories, and movies to talk about transitions and change as a family
- Remember... some kids (if not most) will meet their best friend this year (or new favourite teacher)! Opportunities are ahead.



## Supportive next steps at schools

- Welcoming events
- Sending and receiving schools are meeting and planning. They are excited and learning about their students!
- Initiatives to support positive school climate and community
- Staff are ready to support specific concerns if they arise



## Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board Parent & Caregiver Resources



Website: [www.smcdsb.on.ca](http://www.smcdsb.on.ca) - See Mental Health & Well-Being Section for information, links & resources

Website: [www.smcdsb.on.ca/mhwb](http://www.smcdsb.on.ca/mhwb) - Student Mental Health & Well-Being Website

Social Media: @smcdsb\_mhwb on Instagram

[Beyond the Bell Podcast](#) (formerly *OnPoint Parenting*) - monthly podcast episodes and online article

- Check out the Special Series episodes on supporting transitions from [season one!](#)

**Thank you!**