

Helping Kids Transition

This is based on the writing of Gordon Neufeld and his concept of collecting our children's attention.

Situation: Your child is busy doing something that is holding his attention. You need him to stop doing what he is doing and transition to something else (i.e., video game to family outing, household chores, etc.).

Steps:

- 1) Join the child and focus on what he/she is paying attention to.
- 2) Comment on what the child is doing/achieving. For example: "I see that you are playing ____ and you are trying to ____". "Wow, what you are doing takes a lot of skill". "You're pretty good at this, aren't you?" The purpose of such statements is to "prime the pump" for agreement, to build cooperative relationships, and to join in the focus of the child's attention, not demand that the child give you attention.
- 3) Intercept the child's attention. Look for the opening, then cue your interception by trying to engage eye-contact, smile, use a gentle touch and make a verbal request for attention (for example: "Can I talk to you for a second?").
- 4) Negotiate the transition by using active listening and I statements.

For example:

"I can see that you are really enjoying what you are doing right now and I bet you'd like to continue. However, I'm feeling pressure to get everyone organized and out the door and I need your cooperation. Can you either pause your game or shut it down? It's time to get ready to visit grandma and grandpa. They are expecting us for supper."



Here we see a father joining his child in attending to the game. That is step 1.