

# Easing Transitions

## Helping Your Child Move From One Activity to the Next

Moving from one activity to the next can be challenging for young children. Young children tend



to think that ending or interrupting an activity means that they'll never be able to do it again. They don't have memories that let them know that repetition is possible. They don't have a strong sense of time so they don't understand how long an interruption might be. They can easily lose track of the sequence of events and may forget established schedules and routines. At Habitot, children have to "switch gears" whenever they are asked to pause their play – to change diapers, put on an apron, take off shoes, or leave at the end of the day. Here are some suggestions to help make these changes easier on your child (and you!)

### Anticipate changes and prepare your child in advance

- Remind your child of sequences. Give him a gentle warning or two before it's time to change activities. Try counting down from 10 when it's time to end.
- Let him finish what he's doing if possible. With preschoolers and older children, get their input on what they need in order to finish up, and then help them follow through.



- Set clear limits when an ending is non-negotiable. Acknowledge your child's frustration, sadness or anger if he resists the change and help him remember the preparations he made with you earlier for the transition you're now going through.



### Let your child participate in the process

- Give your child something to carry or let him help in some other way.
- Use rituals like saying goodbye to toys or blowing a kiss when you leave the museum. These can help endings feel more predictable and familiar to your child.
- Make leaving fun. March to the changing table, sing on your way to the car, or recite a nursery rhyme as you tie shoes.
- Offer limited choices: "Do you want to walk or ride in your stroller?" "Should I carry your teddy bear to the car or do you want to?" "Which sock do you want me to put on first?"

### Take the experience with you

- Talk with your child about all the things he did and the fun he had. Let him know when he can come back again.
- Find a small souvenir to take home, or even to the changing table. This will help remind your child of his visit to the museum, and help him to hold on to it after it ends.

