

Visit With The Utays Four Ways to Cope With Change

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My son is finding it tough dealing with a different teacher for every subject. How can I make this shift easier for him?

This question about dealing with change caught our eye(s) because we are in the middle of a transition ourselves here at Total Learning Centers. We are opening a new facility and putting into practice several anxiety-reducing methods to make the transition go as smoothly as possible. As usual, we find using a combination of research and experience provides us with the guidance needed to help others and ourselves.

First, we are holding staff discussions and at-the-new-site planning meetings. While relaxed and comfortable, have your son imagine going through the day handling the transitions from teacher to teacher with ease and confidence. This is what counselors call “guided imagery” and is very powerful. You will need to talk him through the imaginary day, perhaps on several occasions, before he can start imagining it on his own.

Second, we are learning to speak the foreign (to us) language of architects, contractors, city officials, and others on whom we rely to help us. Teach your son how to relate to different types of teachers. For example, help your child positively translate his teacher’s communications such as, facial expressions of concern that may appear as anger, or negative comments meant to motivate not insult.

This can indeed be a hard adjustment for children to relate to various teachers and it can also be stressful for teachers to teach a different group of 25 personalities and sets of academic needs each period. Though some teachers handle this well and in fact are quite skilled at it, some teachers end up being a little less “personal.” Teach your child how to establish a personal relationship (within reason of course) with each teacher. Also, if your child has individual needs

teachers are not aware of, send a note or give them a call to share that information. They will be glad you did and your child hopefully will benefit from modifications the teachers make based on your information.

Our third strategy is organizing the who, what, when, where, how, and oftentimes why, of the many facets of our move. Help your child decide when the best time would be to visit their locker. It may be most efficient to go to it in the morning, get all the books needed for morning classes and then go back again at lunch time and then again at the end of the day. Then again, maybe not. The point is to not take for granted that the most automatic way he organizes the parts of the day he has control over is the most anxiety preventing.

Fourth, we are constantly writing reminders to ourselves and others as to what we need to do by when. Make certain your son has what he needs to write his assignments down for every class period. In elementary school, he may have only had to write assignments at the end of the day. Part of his difficulty dealing with various teachers may be a general sense of being overwhelmed with the entirety of so many varied assignments. Organizing then can be a strong ally in helping divide and prioritize rather than viewing it all as one huge obstacle getting in the way of precious playtime.

Whether adjusting to multiple teachers or opening a learning center, changes – even good ones – are predictably stressful. Remember: learning, practicing, and being successful preventing, reducing, and dealing with the natural stresses of change are vital learning experiences helping your child prepare today for success tomorrow.