

# MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

## The Infant and Toddler Times

JUDY LOBDELL, EDITOR

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### Dates to Remember

#### May

9th. Mother's Day



31st. Memorial Day



#### June

14th. Flag Day

20th. Fathers Day

**The Milford Family  
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## Milford Family Resource Center Program Offerings

### Parents as Teachers Program

A comprehensive parent education program for families with children ages birth to age five. Here are the various services we offer:

### Personal Visits

PAT certified educators, trained in Child Development and home visiting, meet with each family privately currently virtually only. The parent educators help parents understand each stage of their child's development, offer practical tips on ways to encourage learning and promote strong parent-child relationships.

### Playgroups

Weekly playgroups are designed to be fun and educational for both parents and children. Age-appropriate activities, effective parenting strategies, and the enhancement of healthy child development are reinforced. The playgroups are for families with infants to preschoolers and are currently held outside at Fannie Beach Community Center.

### Parent Seminars

Here, parents find out they are not alone. We host informal discussion groups currently virtual for parents where they can gain new insights and share experiences, concerns and successes.

### Resource and Referral

The FRC provides families with resource and referral services to support systems throughout the community. Families need not be enrolled to request support.

### Newsletters

Our monthly newsletter provides developmental information for parents, safety tips, updates on activities in our community, and information on upcoming community and center events. Even when your children are beyond the playgroup age, you can stay in touch. Parenting is a lifelong education.

### Parent Warm Line

Family Resource Center staff are available to help parents who call to ask questions about their child(ren) from birth to age five.

### Ages and Stages Questionnaire

These questionnaires are designed for parents to complete at home while observing their children. The questionnaire focuses on four domains of development: Language, Fine and Gross Motor Development, Social Development, and Emotional Development.

If you would like to participate in any of the services of the Family Resource Center, please feel welcome to call the FRC classroom at 203-783-3626 or email [mfrc@milforded.org](mailto:mfrc@milforded.org) to enroll.

# Why Do Kids Have Trouble With Transitions?

*Katherine Martinelli*

Humans are creatures of habit. Even when we welcome it, change takes more energy. So perhaps it's not surprising that children often find it difficult to make transitions between activities, places and objects of attention. Being asked to stop one thing and start another is a very common trigger for problem behavior, especially for kids who have emotional or developmental challenges.

"Transitions are hard for everybody," says Dr. David Anderson, senior director of the ADHD and Behavior Disorders Center at the Child Mind Institute. "One of the reasons why transitions may be hard is that we're often transitioning from a preferred activity – something we like doing – to something that we need to do."

What does trouble with transitions look like?

Difficulty with transitions can manifest in a number of ways depending on the child and the setting. It can take the form of resistance, avoidance, distraction, negotiation or a full-blown meltdown. Some of these reactions are the result of kids being overwhelmed by their emotions. And some are what they've learned works to successfully delay or avoid the transition.

A child told it's time to leave the playground might throw a tantrum initially because he can't manage his anger or frustration, but if he's found that it has worked to delay leaving the park, he's more likely to do it again. "It really depends on how the adults in his life have responded," says Dr. Matthew Rouse, a clinical psychologist in the ADHD and Disruptive Behavior Disorders Center at the Child Mind Institute. Other kids may not tantrum but instead master the art of whining, distracting, or negotiating with the adults in their life.

What's behind transition problems?

While transitions are triggers for lots of kids – what parent hasn't gotten resistance from a child being asked to stop playing a video game and come to dinner? – they are particularly difficult for kids with emotional and developmental issues. And while the behaviors may be the same, experts point out that the reasons behind the behavior are different for kids with different challenges. Here we look at why children with ADHD, anxiety, autism and sensory processing issues, find transitions particularly difficult.

## **ADHD**

For kids with ADHD, it all comes down to what they perceive as rewarding, says Dr. Rouse. While the disorder is described as an attention *deficit*, experts say it may be more useful to think about it as difficulty *regulating* attention – turning your attention to something you are expected to do, rather than something that you find rewarding.

"Kids with ADHD have fewer neurons in their reward centers, or neurons that aren't as active in the reward centers of their brains, so they find things throughout their day less rewarding," he explains. When they do find something rewarding, they tend to hyper-focus on it, which explains why someone with ADHD seems all over the place but then can play video games for hours. Ask them to do something less rewarding (like putting away Legos), and you might hit resistance.

Dr. Michael Rosenthal, a clinical neuropsychologist, adds that children with ADHD have a tougher time managing their emotions than other kids. "There's also research that shows that the wiring in the brain centers that are involved in helping kids exercise control over their emotions are less developed, so you get bigger emotional displays from them compared to kids who don't have ADHD."

## **Autism**

Although transitions can be similarly challenging for kids with autism, the reactions tend to be more extreme, and the issue is rooted in a different difficulty. "For kids with autism," says Dr. Rosenthal, "the world is just an incredibly confusing and overwhelming place, so the need for sameness and predictability is adaptive," or practical. It's not simply that changing activities is upsetting, it's that any deviation from the routine can feel like the rug is being pulled out from under them. Dr. Rosenthal refers to this as cognitive inflexibility, and says that it also explains why those on the autism spectrum have hyper-focused interests and tend to prefer doing the same things in the same order. "Any unexpected changes or transition for a kid with autism disrupts their equilibrium."

## **Sensory processing challenges**

Although sensory processing is not a diagnostic term like ADHD or autism, kids with either disorder-or no disorder-can have sensory processing issues, which can lead to problems with transitions. For kids who are easily over stimulated, the world feels confusing and seems to move too fast. They crave order, which helps them feel calm and in control. "When you change things up on them too quickly," says Dr. Rosenthal, "then you see resistance or problem behaviors." Kids with sensory issues are sometimes prone to dramatic meltdowns-emotional outbursts that they can't control when they are overwhelmed by unexpected changes.

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### **Anxiety**

For kids who suffer from anxiety, trouble with transitions might come from a place of fear. "It could be fear of the unknown, or fear of what's going to happen when they're put in a new situation," notes Dr. Rosenthal. The problem is "usually some stimuli that's connected to the transition, rather than the process of transitioning itself," he adds.

If they've had an upsetting experience in a particular setting, the prospect of a transition to that location itself could also trigger anxiety. If a child is terrified of dogs, being asked to leave for the home of someone with a dog could trigger a tantrum, or even make a child lash out in anger.

Some kids with anxiety, especially those with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), have an intense need to do things perfectly. If they are interrupted before they are able to do something exactly the right way-forming letters perfectly in a writing assignment, or lining things up or doing a series of things in a prescribed order-they can get very upset, leaving an adult not aware of the anxiety mystified.

Understanding the triggers that make kids balk, or get upset at transitions is the first step to managing them better for both kids and adults. (from child mind institute NYC)

## Milford Public Library 2021 May Program Calendar

### ***May News at the Library!***

Spring flowers are blooming, and to help you get in the spirit, our Friends of the Library are offering their latest seasonal fundraiser, a "Garden Gram". Each Garden Gram includes a packet of seeds, a piece of chocolate, and a decorative handmade flower, nicely wrapped in a small burlap bag. To make it more special, you can add the new "Friends of the Milford Library" mug to your purchase. Grams are available for delivery to residential addresses in Milford. A special delivery is planned for Mother's Day weekend! Visit [www.milfordlibrary.org](http://www.milfordlibrary.org) to order!

Beginning in May we will again be expanding our hours. We will now be open on Mondays, from 10-12, 2-5. Curbside pickup remains, by appointment, on Wednesdays.

As outdoor weather beckons, be sure to check out the newest book at our StoryWalk in Eisenhower Park. The StoryWalk promotes exercise and literacy, while encouraging residents of all ages to spend time in nature.



*Playgroup  
friends*

Try these fun activities to learn about animals and play pretend:

### Talk Together

**For your baby:** What animals do you see outside? Name these different creatures for your baby: birds, squirrels, ducks, dogs, cats, rabbits. Which animal does your baby seem most interested in? Make each animal's sounds. Which sound makes your baby giggle?

**For your toddler:** Baby animals are a special part of spring—can you spot any in your neighborhood? Go on a “safari walk” with your toddler and ask her to tell you when she sees an animal. Does she know the animal's name? The sound it makes? Does she know where it lives (nest, pond, trees, etc.)? Watch these animals with your child and talk about what you see.

### Read Together

Read books that feature different kinds of animals. For babies, try: *Whose Nose and Toes?* by John Butler, *Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?* by Eric Carle, *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann, *Baby Animals* by DK Publishing, and *Country Animals, Farm Animals, and Pet Animals* by Lucy Cousins. For older toddlers, good choices include *Over in the Meadow* by Ezra Jack Keats, *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey, *Mrs. Brown Went to Town* by Wong Herbert Yee, *Cock-a-Doodle-Do!* *Barnyard Hullabaloo* by Giles Andreae, *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood, and *I Love My Mama* by Peter Kavanagh.

### Play Together

**For your baby:** Babies are often captivated by watching animals outside or through the window. Stick with your baby and let him watch as long as he wants, though be very cautious about approaching animals you do not know. Teaching your child animal safety begins early. You can support your baby's interest in animals by, for example, installing a bird feeder to encourage birds to visit. For an indoor activity, you can give your baby swatches of fake fur and feathers to touch (both available at craft stores).

**For your toddler:** Cut pictures of animals out of magazines and glue them to sturdy cardboard. Make sure there are matches—2 pictures of horses, 2 pictures of sheep, etc. Lay these pictures out (face up) on the floor and see if your child can match the animals that are the same. Matching games build thinking skills in your toddler. You can also play “barnyard.” With your child, walk and “talk” like an animal—perhaps meow like a cat or “trot” and neigh like horse. Which animals does your child like to be? Turn a big cardboard box into a barn and see if your child would like to pretend to trot in and out.

<https://www.zerotothree.org>





# MY MOM IS A RAINBOW!

Each color is needed to make a rainbow, each of her talents makes her my amazing Mom!

## She is Red

Red represents her energy, vitality, perseverance and willingness to give of herself.

## She is Orange

Orange stands for her thoughtfulness, consideration, persuasion and vibrancy

## She is Yellow

Yellow demonstrates her optimism, concentration, integrity and energy.

## She is Green

Green represents her honesty, happiness, health and in tune with the earth.

## She is Blue

Blue represents her love, faith, healing, loyalty, and inspiration.

## She is Purple

Purple represents her leadership, greatness, and unselfish efforts.

Alone, each color is striking, but when the colors come together,  
a larger more beautiful thing occurs.

A RAINBOW is created within my MOM.

YOU are my RAINBOW!

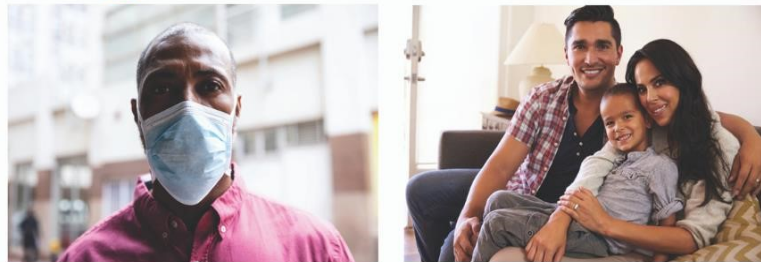
I LOVE YOU MOM!



# UniteCT

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMY

## Have you been financially impacted by COVID-19?



## Are you struggling to pay your rent and utilities?

Apply for UniteCT, a rental assistance program supporting CT residents who earn up to **80% of the HUD Area Median Income** and their landlords.

**You may qualify for the opportunity to receive...**

- ✓ **Missed electric outstanding payments**
- ✓ **Missed rent or future rent payments**

To learn more and see if you qualify, visit:



[www.bit.ly/UniteCT](http://www.bit.ly/UniteCT)

scan QR code:

