

Where They're Planted Podcast: Episode 62: Transition activities

When the unstructured nature of a transition leads to disorganization, here are some activities that can add interest, playfulness and structure. Remember, these can be added to downtime during transitions, or right into the transition itself, creativity is key!

-Puzzle piece hide and seek - Use an "easy" puzzle and hide the pieces around one room or area. Challenge your child to find the pieces and put it together. For kids that like timing themselves, they can see how long it takes them.

-Color match game - Use paint swatches or a color wheel and have your child hunt for things that match the colors. See how many they can get in a certain time frame or have them find a certain color scheme "Can you find something to match all of the blue swatches?" or "I wonder if you can match this one exactly." (I use a ring clip to bind them together. You can take a few off or give them the whole ring of colors.)

-Photo match game - Take some photos of things around your house with a phone or camera that you don't mind your child running around with. Challenge your child to find the items. For an extra challenge, change the colors in the photos, take a weird angle or get a close up.

-Scavenger Hunts - Find it! (Ex. Find 5 (textures, shapes, colors, things that start or end with letter ..., things that rhyme with..., ...)) You could add a bingo board to this to change it up.

-Make a pattern on the floor-using Legos, Duplos, blocks, magnetiles etc

"Go outside in the yard and find something that ..." (Ex. fits in your hand and is shaped like a heart.) Remember to give clear game boundaries.

-Magnet exploration- give kids a magnet and have them find things around the house that are magnetic and report back. See if they can find 5 things to start and if that's easy, go higher. Later ask, "Which magnetic item was most surprising to you and why?"

-Obstacle Courses - Parent sets up an obstacle course in advance. Or, have your child set one up for themselves or a sibling or you! Remember to give game boundaries and remind them of safety/things that are off limits. Ex. Use 10 items to create an obstacle course in the living room. You must stay one arms length from the corner of the coffee table.

-Nature Detective/Nature Journaling - This can be especially exciting when the seasons are changing. Give your child a nature detective notebook/journal to jot down observations and make drawings of discoveries. They can design the cover and even think of an

undercover code name. The prompts with this are endless and could be interest-based.

"Become a nature detective and find 3 signs of fall." "Can you find and draw an animal's home?" "Can you find a pattern in nature and draw it?" "Look up! Lay on the grass or porch and look up. Draw what you see." "Lay on the grass and look around as if you are bunny-sized. Draw what the world looks like." "Draw a map of your yard." "Throw a hula hoop or use a string to make a circle. Look closely at everything in the hoop. Draw what you see." "Sit quietly for 3 minutes and draw or write what you hear." "Find and draw 3 green things."

-Stamping textures - Use silly putty or similar and challenge your child to find and press different textures outdoors. Use a washable ink pad to stamp the texture into their nature journal or on a piece of paper. Try to guess what they've stamped later on. I do this outdoors because the ink can get on furniture/walls.

-Texture rubbings - use a crayon and paper to find different textures. Leaves and bark work well but there are many, many others to discover. You can show them easily with a leaf and use the side of the crayon.

-Shadow art - Use a toy or object and set it up in the sun so it makes a shadow. Trace the shadow and compare it to the item. Toy dinosaurs or figures work well for this.

-Doodle art - Make a small doodle or squiggles on a paper and have your child make it into something.

-Spelling with Objects - Write your name using ... (rocks, stuffed animals, cups, spoons, leaves...)

-Silent basketball - Dribble a silent basketball through an obstacle course of cones or use anything you have like toys and pillows.

-Outdoor Race Course - For kids that can be outdoors safely, have your child make a course with chalk and jump, ride, roll, etc. They can practice and show you their skills later.

These are just to get the ideas flowing....The possibilities are endless if you recruit playfulness and curiosity!