

How to Teach that Change is Okay



Proactive Strategies to Try:

Reward the individual when they deal with a change appropriately (no matter how small the change).



Role play hypothetical situations that tend to cause difficulty and practice the desired behaviour.



Discuss the possibility of change. Example: If it rains we can't go for a walk. What should we do instead?



Discuss and model dealing with change appropriately. Example: "I really wanted to go to the store but when I got there they were closed. That's okay, I can try again tomorrow."



Provide clear limits, but when possible offer a choice within these boundaries – this gives the individual some control (i.e. "we have to wait here for the doctor, but do you want to watch something on your tablet or look at this magazine?")



Create situations for change throughout the day for the individual to practice. Things you can change: snacks or meals (food items, times or locations), outings (destinations, dates/times, who will be going), household items (i.e. toothpaste brand), sequence of routines.

Change is Okay!

- To begin, set up situations where the individual can experience changes in small steps with non-preferred activities or neutral items.
- For example: schedule a less desirable dinner then closer to dinner time say you changed your mind and deliver a highly preferred dinner.
- Another example could be saying you are going (with the individual) to a store that does not interest the individual, then before leaving change your mind and take them to a highly preferred store.
- It's important only to try this if you think they will be accepting of this positive change and it will not cause any distress.

Let's break it Down!

- 1** Small changes to non-preferred items/activities -> leads to preferred item/activity
- 2** Small changes to neutral items/activities -> leads to preferred item/activity
- 3** Small changes to preferable items/activities -> leads to other preferred item/activity
- 4** Small changes to preferable items/activities -> leads to other preferred item/activity
- 5** Small changes to preferable items/activities -> leads to neutral item/activity
- 6** Small changes to preferable items/activities -> leads to non-preferred item/activity

*Switch it up – at times offer choice in the item/activity you are changing.

*Move on to bigger changes

Moving to the next step:

- When the individual begins to accept 'change' in the situations you created.
- This may look like no misbehaviour during these situations.
- As you move on to the next step add a few instances of the previously mastered step(s) so that the individual will start to learn that change can sometimes lead to a more preferred items, neutral items, an undesirable item or no item/activity.

Rewards:

At times the change itself will lead to rewards. In addition, you can give the individual any preferred item paired with descriptive praise for responding appropriately to the change.

REWARD 