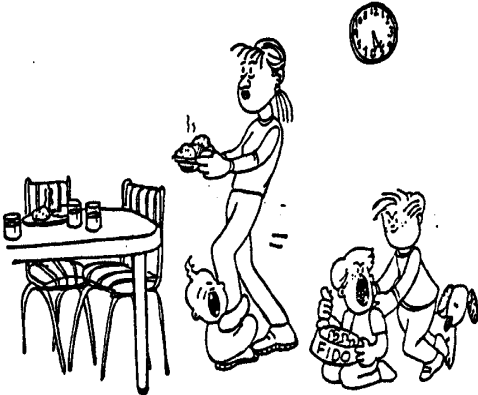


Chaos – Cut it Out!

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The Arsenic Hour

All kids benefit from predictability and routine. Some children are very sensitive to change, especially if they are the type of children who don't like surprises or tend to be cautious. If you are springing a lot of change or unpredictability on your child, you really need to CUT IT OUT! Chaos (because of a lack of routine) can be a major trigger for meltdowns. Planning your day and limiting unnecessary change can make a huge difference. Think about how you can simplify your daily experience. If you have a child who doesn't do well with change, be aware of this and put

the experience into words: "I think you feel uncomfortable and upset when you have to stop playing at pre-school and come to the van. What would make this easier for you?" Or, "I notice when you start a new semester at school, you seem to be more stressed (or have more stomach aches). What helped you cope with this last time? Do you remember the feelings changing when you did things to cope?" Articulate the trigger, accept your child's feelings, and invite them to discuss strategies to work through these times. When they're part of solving the problem, the uncertainty gets taken care of and they develop more confidence. :

- Plan ahead for stressful times
- Always warn your child before a transition, even turning off the TV.
- Follow the same routine in the morning, leaving the house and at bedtime.
- Limit the number of transitions in a day and cut down on unnecessary activities.
- Children under five can receive a stamp on their hand after a smooth transition – the stamps can be reviewed before bedtime so kids can talk about how they felt or what made them feel better.
- Children five years and older can benefit from having their own calendars that have their schedules in black and white or blue or red..... seeing it helps!