Helping Your Child in Foster Care Handle Transitions

Transitions are never easy for children, especially those in foster care

Examples of Transitions

- Making new friends
- Joining a new foster family
- Starting at a new school/childcare
- Visiting biological parents

Pointers for Parents:

- Children in foster care need time to adjust.
  *Children in foster care face many changes all at once.*
  *A new home, a new school, new friends—the loss of all that is familiar can be scary and overwhelming.*

- New problems may come up after the first month or so.
  *As children settle into their new home, they may start feeling more comfortable.*
  *Problems with behavior are common around this time.*

- Children crave routine and structure.
  *All children do better when they know what to expect.*
  *Having a consistent routine can be comforting to a child in foster care.*
  *Post a schedule to explain household routines.*

- Transitional objects (for example, a favorite blanket or stuffed animal) can help make transitions easier.

- Encourage your child to share feelings as a way to cope.
  *Name emotions so he will know what to say next time.*
  *“Sometimes kids feel worried before a visit”, “You look nervous,” or “You look worried.”* 
  *Prepare for changes by talking about it ahead of time.*

- Talk to your caseworker about concerning transition issues.
- Ask your pediatrician.

Transitions are never easy.

Children in foster care need routine, structure and reassurance.