

Making Changes in Routines

Children with deaf-blindness, like others, frequently resist changes in their routines. They may be frightened, angry, or refuse to participate in the new activity.

To assist the child in accepting and understanding what will happen next, you can tell the child about the changes in a number of ways.

1. You can develop signals which let her know what to expect. For example, you can have the child smell food being prepared and can touch the child's hand or mouth with a spoon to let her know mealtime is coming. Be sure to do this before moving her to the table, so she will know why and where she is going.
2. You can have the child carry an object with her as she moves to the next activity. The object should represent that new activity. She will then have time to think about what she will be doing. See the Fact Sheet on Object Communication (Order # 004) for further strategies.
3. Be sure to introduce new care providers or teachers to the child, so she knows who she is working or playing with at all times. See the Fact Sheet on "How to Interact with Individuals with Dual Sensory Impairments" (Order #008) for further information on introductions.
4. Be sure to let the child know when she is going to receive medical treatment. For example, say "The nurse will need to take some blood" while allowing the child to feel the band to be placed on her arm and a gentle poking on her arm or finger.

You cannot prepare the child for every change that might occur. Whenever possible give the child time to prepare for changes to help her feel comfortable and to develop trust.

Adapted from Sternberg-White, S., Chen D., Watts, J., 1992,
Developing Social-Emotional Skills, INSITE, Utah State University, Logan, Utah

Fact sheets from California Deaf-Blind Services are to be used by both families and professionals serving individuals with dual sensory impairments. The information applies to students 0-22 years of age. The purpose of the fact sheet is to give general information on a specific topic. More specific information for an individual student can be provided through individualized technical assistance available from CDBS. The fact sheet is a starting point for further information.