



Build New Routines

It may also be necessary to create **new routines** during this time, as there are many new demands of caregivers—possibly homeschooling for the first time, continuing to work in/out of the home, and/or caring for multiple children or other family members. Several new routines that may be helpful are described below:

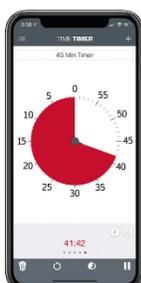
Transitioning off screens: For many reasons, including those listed above, children and



young adults may access screens more often and for longer periods of the day during this time.

Transitioning away from a device, especially after a period of extended use, may be difficult for many children and young adults; however, the behavioral rigidity and inflexibility often characteristic in individuals with autism may make these transitions problematic. Establishing a clear, consistent, and concrete routine for this transition can better prepare the individual for the coming transition and offer support throughout.

- **Use a visual timer.** It may be helpful for individuals with autism to “see” how much time remains of screen time before they will be expected to transition to off the device. Concepts related to time are fairly abstract (e.g. “You have a few minutes”), often cannot



be interpreted literally (e.g. “Just a second” or “We need to get off in a minute”), and may be confusing, especially if time-telling is not a mastered skill. Presenting information related to time visually can assist in making the concepts more meaningful. One example is the Time Timer™ app (<https://www.timetimer.com/collection/s/applications>), which displays a section of red that disappears when the time runs out.

- Another visual transition strategy to use is a **visual countdown system**. Like the visual timer, a visual



countdown allows an individual to “see” how much time is remaining in an activity. The countdown differs, however, because there is no specific time increment used. This tool is beneficial if the timing of the transition needs to be flexible (e.g. caregiver would like the child to stay engaged on the device during a work

call but does not know when it will end). A countdown system can be made with numbered or colored squares or sticky notes, or any shape or style that is meaningful to the individual. As the transition nears, the caregiver can pull off or cross off the top item (e.g. the number 5) so the individual is able to see that only 4 items remain. The caregiver decides how quickly or slowly to remove the remaining items depending on when the transition will occur. Two minutes may elapse between the removal of number 3 and number 2, while a longer amount of time may elapse before the final number is removed. Once the final item is removed, the individual is taught that it is time to transition. Several examples are provided, and these can be used to support any transition.



the nightly walk, meal options, order of activities for the day, and/or preferences for activities. Several examples are provided for use across the day and age range.

Create a workspace with a to-do list. For the first time, many children and young adults will be

expected to complete schoolwork in the home setting. Individuals with autism may have difficulty generalizing the strategies and skills they used in the school environment to the home environment (e.g. organizing materials, attending to work activities, submitting assignments online). Thus, it will be helpful to set up a designated workspace to help clarify expectations and reduce distractions. This may be a spot at the dining room table designated by a colored placemat and facing away from the television or



window. If multiple children are working in one space, consider adding a small visual divider (e.g. an open folder) between them. Caregivers can create a

visual “to-do” list in several different ways—a) placing the individual worksheets to be completed on the child’s left and a small basket on the child’s right to put them in when they are finished, or b) writing a short list on a sticky note of the tasks to accomplish during the work session (e.g. 1 science story and 15 minutes of ABC Mouse). These can be crossed off when they are

Offer choices. In a time of crisis, when most people feel like so much is out of their



control, providing choices can increase a sense of autonomy and motivation. Creating regular opportunities across the day where family members have a

voice about what happens and when it happens can serve as an effective anxiety reducing strategy and a communication tool. These choices might include the route for

finished. Older children and young adults can likely generate their own to-do lists but

may need some initial support to set up a workspace and launch these routines.

Resources include:

[Visual Support: Example of a Daily Schedule](#)

[Visual Support: Daily Schedule Template](#)

[Visual Support: Example of a Daily Schedule \(Using Stickie Notes\)](#)

[Visual Support: Daily Schedule Template \(Using Stickie Notes\)](#)

[Visual Support: Weekly Schedule Template](#)

[Visual Support: Choice Board of Inside and Outside Activities](#)

[Visual Support: Weekly Choices and Goals Template](#)

[Educational Resources for Kids](#)

[Movement Resources for Kids](#)

[Educational and Movement Resources for Teenagers](#)

[Additional Activity Resources](#)

[How to Transition Off Screens](#)

Daily Schedule Example

Task	Done
 <p>Wake Up</p>	
 <p>Brush Teeth</p>	
 <p>Get Dress</p>	
 <p>Eat Breakfast</p>	
 <p>Read (30 minutes)</p>	
 <p>Exercise (30 minutes)</p>	

* Note: Icons from Microsoft Word Icons (Insert tab)

Daily Schedule

Task	Done

Daily Schedule Example

Task	To Be Done	Done
 <p>Read (45 minutes)</p>		
 <p>Computer (30 minutes)</p>		
 <p>Eat lunch</p>		
 <p>Walk the dog</p>		
 <p>Complete homework</p>		
 <p>Eat snack</p>		

Daily Schedule Using Stickie Notes

Task	To Be Done	Done

Weekly Schedule

Task	S	M	T	W	T	F	S

Inside and Outside Activities



Inside



Outside



Read books



Play ball



Play games



Yard work



Draw or color



Take a walk



Computer games



Go on a nature hike

Weekly Choices and Goals



One thing I want to read for fun this week is:



One thing I plan to do outside this week is:



One game I want to play as a family this week is:



One way I plan to get exercise this week is:



One way I plan to be helpful this week is:



One thing I want to do with _____ (family member) this week is:



One movie/show I want to watch this week is:



One thing I want to learn about this week is:

(Adapted from Danielle Berman, Durham, NC)

Educational Resources for Kids



[Starfall](#)



[MathGames](#)



[Scholastic](#)



[NASA's Kid Club](#)



[PBS Kids Games](#)



[The Weather Channel: America's Science Classroom](#)



[National Geographic Kids](#)



[Google Arts & Culture](#)

Movement Resources for Kids



[Yoga](#)



[GoNoodle](#)



[The Learning Station](#)



[Active for Life](#)

Educational and Movement Resources for Teenagers

Educational



[Khan Academy](#)

Free online courses, lessons, and practice



[Scratch](#)

Program your own animations and stories



[TEDEd](#)

Videos on topics of interest



[Smithsonian Teen Tribune](#)

Articles about hot topics written across reading levels

Movement



[Yoga with Adriene](#)



[Born to Move](#)



The Fitologists
74.8K subscribers

[The Fitologists](#)

Additional Activity Resources



[Time to learn about space!](#)

[Boredom Busters: 110 Fun At-Home Activities for Families & Kids](#)



Family Implemented
TEACCH for Toddlers
TEACCH strategies that fit into your day

[Early Learning Activities & Visual Supports](#)



circletime

[Kids Classes from Home](#)

How to Transition Off Screens

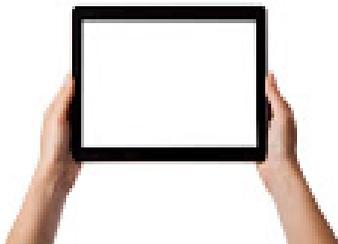
1. As much as possible, try to plan for screen time in the daily schedule. Make the times reasonable for your child's age.

2. Use a timer or clock to let your child know how much screen time they have so that they know what to expect.



3. Try to avoid planning screen time before non-preferred activities. For example, it might be easier to transition your child from screen time to snack than it would be to transition from screen time to an academic task.

First



Then

