

Follow your art

Activities at the **ART THERAPY INTERNATIONAL CENTRE** can help little ones go through periods of transition and confusion with more confidence, grace and stability, while helping to develop their resilience, creativity and self-esteem.

You're battling the post-summer blues, while frantically trying to get the kids ready for the new school year. Does the act of juggling your children's apprehension and your own anxiety for them sound familiar? You are most likely in the realm of transition as a forced participant or an active bystander. And if you are feeling this way, have you considered the effects of transition on your children?

Transition is a time of change as we pass through the various stages of life. For babies, this can be the weaning from milk to solid foods. For the young child, transitions can happen when he enters his nursery years and then starts school. For adults, life changes can include marrying, divorcing, having children, changing jobs or moving.

Transition is a natural part of life. But do you wonder what happens to your children when faced with a life transition? The transitions that take place during childhood can be viewed as one of the most influential in our lives, as this is a time when we are faced with the realities of change.

The more appropriately childhood transitions are dealt with, and successfully completed, the less likely we are to repeat unresolved transitions later on in life. Also, we are also less likely to become paralysed by the inevitable transitions throughout our development.

When children handle transition well, they learn to cope with change positively. They develop appropriate coping strategies, while building necessary resilience.

But if they have a negative association of transition, and manage change poorly, they can end up feeling

insecure, unconfident and overly anxious.

The child who faces transition with appropriate support will view change in a more positive light than the child who has been undermined, ignored, harshly criticised, punished or ridiculed at these stages. The former has learned to deal confidently with transition, while the other tends to be afraid of moving on or of facing new challenges. Hence, it is crucial that children learn how to process change, good or bad.

Help your children to make a positive transition

- Ensure that their basic needs are met
- Maintain and encourage their positive relationships
- Provide support and resources to them in their new environment, and modify routines as appropriate
- Offer them choices, and involve them in the transition process to promote and support self-advocacy
- Support their need for increased independence and help them to create their own identity
- Prepare them for the transition, and ensure consistency within and between environments
- Ensure that all transition plans are coordinated, and that information is shared in order to help ease anxiety
- Allow them to express their emotions, positive or negative. Provide reassurance, without shielding them to the point that you take away their ability to develop their coping skills.



Of course, since we are all different, children may be presented with similar routine life transitions that they may be able to cope with. And yet at times, more significant and challenging circumstances may still affect them.

Not every child has the natural or developed resilience, or the adequate coping strategies to rely on, in order to face change adequately. Such children require extra support – and art therapy can be a helpful tool in aiding them with managing transitions. *Art Therapy International Centre* (ATIC) can help provide your children with a creative approach to change – which can also aid in their development:

- ✓ Art-making can be a natural way for children to express, process and regulate emotions
- ✓ A session with one of ATIC's trained art therapists can aid kids in expressing their hopes and fears
- ✓ Using art as a therapeutic outlet can help children to learn healthy coping strategies in order to manage change
- ✓ Art as an outlet can help prevent complications to transition, such as managing high anxiety
- ✓ Creating art can help kids to build up their self-esteem and confidence in adapting to change.
- ✓ Art therapy can provide early intervention to ensure their smooth transition through life stages
- ✓ Having a creative outlet also helps to prevent maladaptive behaviour

ATIC is also proud to announce its very own transition with the opening of *ATIC Psychological and Counselling Centre* in Dubai. **F**

Creating a difference in people's lives when words are not enough – **Art Therapy International Centre** (ATIC) was founded in 2010. ATIC houses an art and creative studio providing creative art therapy and counselling sessions, and welcomes children, adults and couples. Their art psychotherapists are trained artists, educators and therapists who are experienced in dealing with issues such as addictions, anger, anxiety, depression, eating disorders and low self-esteem. ATIC also helps people with transition difficulties, learning needs and relationship or marriage problems.

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