

A decorative border with intricate floral and vine patterns surrounds the central text. The border features stylized leaves, flowers, and scrolling vines, creating a classic, ornate frame.

Mothering Matters

Parenting in Switzerland

LETTING GO

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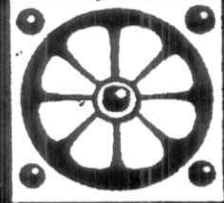
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Survival

CHANGING AND ADAPTING TO NEW ROUTINES



Many parents, but especially mothers, have concerns and anxieties about changing their children's routines. This is especially relevant when contemplating letting go of the comfort and security of certain aspects of care such as breastfeeding, going back to work, sending children to nursery, etc. Children may protest in such a way that mothers become fearful they could suffer some emotional effects – or even cause themselves physical harm. You can usually sense whether your child will get over it and begin to adjust to the new situation or whether you need to go back to the previous routine for a little while longer. The father, or another close adult, can play an important part at this stage by supporting the mother and helping her set limits, bring about change... and ultimately let go.

Some helpful suggestions

- ❖ Any act of letting go can provoke a sense of loss and be emotionally unsettling for both child and parent. Take it a step at a time – it needs to be a gradual process.
- ❖ Prepare children for any change that is coming and try not to spring it on them. It helps to talk about it and rehearse for it – by making it into a game, for instance.
- ❖ Acknowledge both your feelings and those of your children. Your children will trust you and be more confident with changes if you acknowledge their feelings directly.
- ❖ Remember to be confident; it is better not to hover and appear anxious.
- ❖ Remember that change encourages your child to develop independence even though it may cause stress at first.
- ❖ Most of us thrive on a healthy mix of stable routines and new challenges. Children do, too.



Some extra tips

Some ideas include mothering groups, friends/family, and nursery staff. Talk it out and laugh it out with them; chances are that they themselves have been there before.

- ❖ Imagine your life 10 years from now. Then look 20 years into the future, and then 30. Realize that many of the things you are worrying about do not really matter in the grand scheme of things.
- ❖ Replace your thoughts. Notice when you begin thinking about something that stresses you, so you can shift your thoughts to something more pleasant.

- ❖ Use it up. Make two lists: one with the root causes of your stress, and one with actions to address them. As you complete these tasks, visualize yourself utilizing and depleting your “worry supply.”
- ❖ Consider this quotation by Eckhart Tolle: “Worry pretends to be necessary but serves no useful purpose.” Questioning how your stress serves you may help you let it go.

Parents give numerous reasons for holding onto certain routines and habits and not letting go. As children grow and develop, however, it is critical that parents learn to shift

old habits and help adapt new ones. This is done to properly accommodate for changes in children’s lives – be they physical, emotional, mental, psychological or any other type of development.

As difficult as the process might be for some parents, it is possible to get better in time with a little patience, practice and support. †

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