The Seven Stages of Transitions

1. **The Fog** -- This happens at the end of the old stage and before the beginning of the new stage. Persons in this stage feel like they are living in a fog and feel overwhelmed or confused.

   *What to do for your children:* Encourage them to be around familiar people and things. Help them to continue good, healthy habits. Help them to avoid making hasty decisions or acting without thinking.

2. **Denial or Minimizing** -- This happens in reaction to change. People try to live life as usual, as if nothing has changed. Even thought they may be pretending that everything is okay, they may be more sensitive than normal and may overemphasize normal behavior. They may push others away during this time.

   *What to do for your children:* Encourage your children to talk about or write down their feelings about what is happening to them.

3. **The Low Point** -- This is the point when persons feel low, depressed and helpless. They may have a low energy level and become angry easily.

   *What to do for your children:* It is important to let your children know that it is okay to feel the way they do. Listen to what they have to say. Avoid giving them advice. Keep them busy doing things that don't take much thought, such as helping with chores or playing simple games.

4. **Beginning to Let Go of the Past** -- This is the time when persons begin to face what is past and the losses that go with that. They may feel very insecure going into the new situation.

   *What to do for your children:* Help your children identify what has ended and what has been or will be lost because of that. Help your children grieve the losses. A ceremony or ritual such as writing a poem or a story about the stage in life being left behind may help them to move forward. Help your children identify the gains that may come from the new stage in life.

5. **Looking Toward the Future** -- Persons begin to feel more confident with the change at this stage. However, they may move between this stage and earlier stages for awhile. They may become excited about the future and become more outgoing at this stage.

   *What to do for your children:* Learn all you can about the new situation. Find a book to read together, or find information about what to expect in the new stage of life. Try to help your children look at the new situation in a different way.

6. **Finding Meaning in the Transition** -- This is the time to create new patterns or traditions. Things become more peaceful and all the turmoil of change starts to make sense. The future may look promising.

   *What to do for your children:* Give them time to be alone to think through the changes and to think about what their new life is like.

7. **Resolution of the Transition** -- This is the final stage of the transition process. It's the new beginning. It is accepting the change and understanding how it fits into one's life. There is a feeling of moving forward. Life seems balanced and normal again.

   *What to do for your children:* Provide a stable home for them to reinforce these feelings.