CHILD CARE ANSWERS

Tips for Using a 'First, Then' Board

We use “First, Then” boards to help children know expected behaviors and routines. They are a great tool for any young child; however, they are especially helpful for children who struggle with anxiety and behaviors during transitions.

How to Use:

1. Print and cut out cards only.
2. Laminate the First, Then board and cards.
3. Put soft side of Velcro on First, Then board. Put rough side of Velcro on cards.
4. Put two long strips of the soft side of Velcro on the back of the board.
5. Store all cards on the back of the board.
6. Put the least desired activity on the First side, and the activity your child likes to do on the Then side.
7. Say something like, "*First* we will eat lunch, *Then* we can play." Point to the cards as you talk about them.

Personalize

Advice to give families: First, Then boards work best when they reflect your family's routine. Personalize cards, as needed, to best support your child at home.

Add Pictures

You can have the child draw the pictures of each activity or you can take pictures of the child doing each activity. Print and use your own pictures to help build excitement and understanding.

It takes time for a child to develop a new routine, and it will not always go smoothly. With practice, they will find a rhythm in a routine.

GET MORE RESOURCES!

Our website includes dozens of resources to help you in your journey as a child care professional.

FIRST

THEN

MEAL

GO POTTY

WASH HANDS

CLEAN UP

GET IN CARSEAT

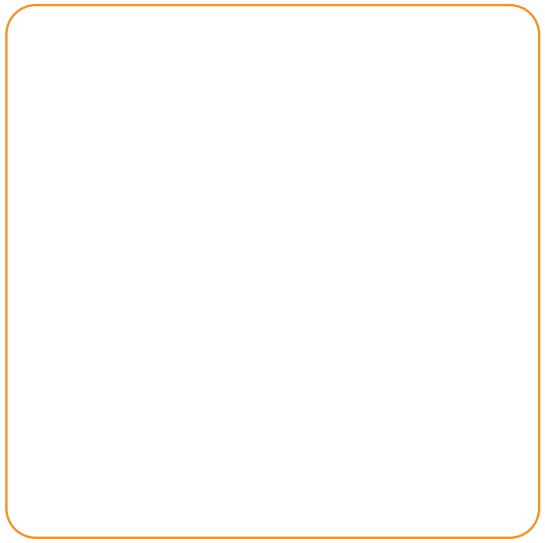
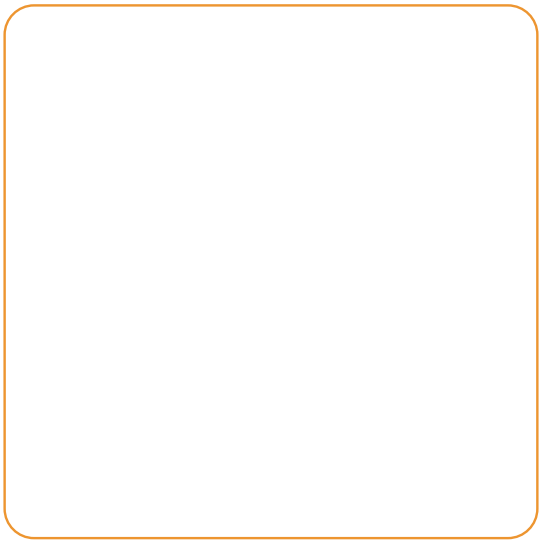
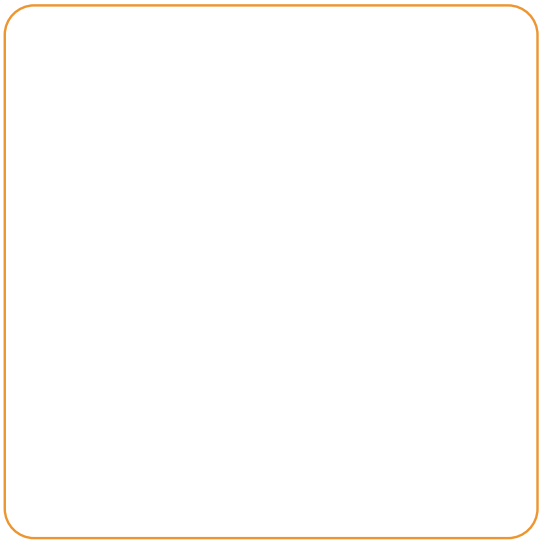
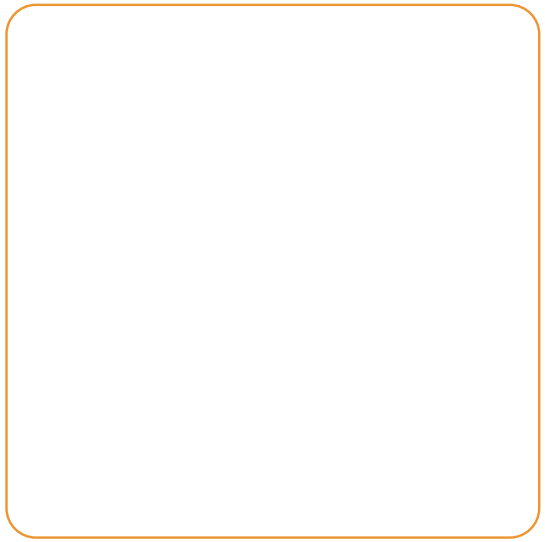
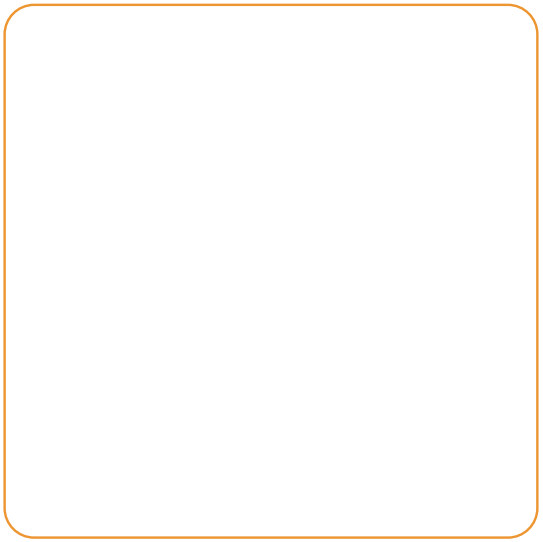
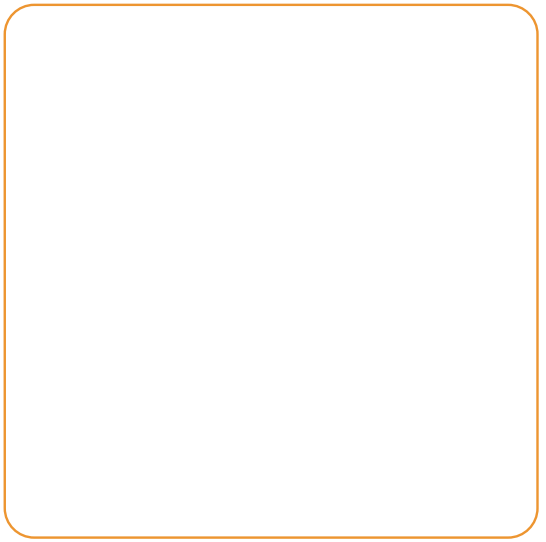
BRUSH TEETH

PLAY

GO TO PLAYGROUND

READ A BOOK

WATCH A SHOW

DRAW A PICTURE

SPEND TIME WITH GROWN-UP