Talking to Young Children about Change - Ten Tips

1. Observe your children and be aware of how they are reacting to change.

2. Make sure that you identify and process your own feelings about change.

3. Talk to members of your support system about the changes; talk to a professional if you are having difficulty sorting out feelings or in determining action steps.

4. Do not assume that your children are not affected by change because you see no obvious reactions; provide them with avenues to talk to you about how they feel and how they have been affected.

5. Assure you child that your family will get through the changes and that you will be there to help them get through the difficult parts; be a “leader” for your child throughout the change process, model for them healthy ways of dealing with both situational solutions as well as feelings.

6. Share with children your plans for dealing with upcoming changes; young ones only need general information, while older children need answers that make sense to them.

7. If you are sad or upset about changes, be honest about why, without dumping your feelings on them.

8. Do not overreact by making them feel that catastrophe is afoot (keep things as normal as possible), nor put ideas in their minds that would make them overreact (too much detail).

9. Be patient with their behavior changes, yet stay firm with your established boundaries and discipline as to neither confuse them nor teach them that inappropriate behaviors are OK.

10. If they seem sad (not depressed) or stressed (not anxiety ridden) this is normal for a short period of time – if it goes on for months get them some assistance from a professional.