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# CHANGES IN ROUTINE AND BEHAVIOUR

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Some children can find it difficult to know what is, and isn't, expected of them if they have a number of carers.

Today, many parents work while their children are looked after, or kids are left with relatives at the weekend to give mum and dad a break. There may be issues around these times, and what can be very different routines to home. Sometimes the result is that children become unsettled, or confused and demanding. While children can cope with some changes to their routines, major differences do cause problems for them.

Parents who leave their children for periods of time in another adult's care should discuss, in detail, how they will be looked after. This should involve talking about the carer's attitude to discipline, as well as your child's feeding, play and sleep patterns. Make sure they know as much as possible about your child's normal day, and are aware of any little idiosyncrasies.

If you get to the stage where your child is experiencing too many different styles of management, you would be well advised to consider alternative arrangements.

**Q:**

***My mother takes our two sons every other weekend to let us get out for a bit. It's very kind of her, but when the kids come home, they're hyper! They've had lots of fizzy drinks and sweets, and been up well past their bedtime. We don't want to offend her. What should we do?***

**A:**

It's great that you get a break, but you are paying a heavy price on Sunday evenings trying to get the children calmed down again!

You will have to sit down with your mother and tactfully discuss bedtimes, diets and treats. You don't want to spoil the children's fun - as going to their grandmother's is very special for them. But maybe you could put a limit on bedtime, and talk to her about the kinds of food you'd like the children to have. Explain that you think different foods affect their behaviour, and ask her to avoid these for a while to see if it makes a difference.

Most children need time to adjust when they move from one place to another. Once they're home, try and get them back into your way of going as soon as possible.

