



Tips for Improving Classroom Transitions

- ✚ Plan your transition activities each day. Include them in your written lesson plans. They, too, have a beginning, middle, and end like other lessons you develop.
- ✚ Make sure all of your teaching materials and children's materials are ready for the day and accessible to the activity area. Any missing part of this preparation may cause a wait time for the children.
- ✚ Reduce the total number of transitions in your day.
- ✚ As much as possible, eliminate waiting time until everyone is finished.
- ✚ Give children warnings before transitions occur. When children are actively playing, they might resist having play disrupted. Give children notice three to five minutes before they have to put the toys away. This shows respectful caring.
- ✚ Give children who take a long time or have difficulty with transitions individual guidance. Give them a five-minute warning versus three for other children. Model clean up and physically give them help to get them through the routine change.
- ✚ Give advance publicity for the next activity. Make sure enjoyable activities follow less motivating periods. "After we clean up, we're going to make a delicious snack with peanut butter."

- ✚ Use one-step, two-step, or three-step directions appropriate for the age of the child. The young child or a child with a cognitive or language delay needs fewer directions. A good rule of thumb is one direction for each year (or less).

- ✚ Touch, physically guide, and speak individually to younger or less mature children and those new to the program, to help them through the transition.

- ✚ If possible, position one staff member at the new area to engage children in the new activity. Do or have something to grab their attention. Motivate them to come.

- ✚ Give children a task if they must wait. Daily routine and transitions are invaluable learning times for children. This is a great opportunity to practice cognitive skills such as counting; or social language, or eye hand coordination skills. Encourage cooperation between children. Ask them to work together to set out the lunch, bring in the bikes or take down decorations.

- ✚ Avoid moving the whole group from one activity to another when possible. Divide children into smaller groups to move them from one place to another. This cuts down on confusion, distractions and milling around.

- ✚ Develop a bag of tricks to help you out of sticky situations.