

# Transitions

At the beginning of the school year, many teachers may agree that transitions are a challenging task as there are twenty young children who are experiencing school for the first time. Students need many opportunities to practice each transition and receive supportive feedback from teachers so that they feel successful. ***Following a consistent daily schedule supports children's predictability and sense of security.*** Teachers need to adjust their expectations and respond to individual children's abilities and development to establish smooth transitions so that the time for learning is maximized.

## Smooth Transition Strategies

### **1. Establish routine within a transition.**

#### **Example:** Arrival

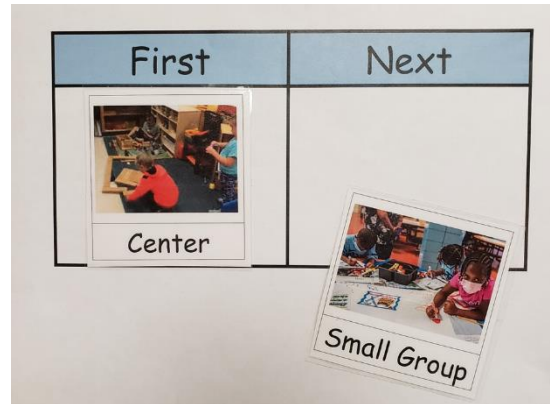
- 1) A child enters the classroom.
- 2) He or she moves his/her picture from "home" to "school."
- 3) Student washes his/her hands (or use hand sanitizer).
- 4) Student sits on the carpet.

#### **Example:** Whole group to centers

- 1) Send a small group of children at a time.  
"If your name starts with /a/ sound, get your picture/card, and go choose a center." (Repeat calling students by the initial sounds of their names until all have been called.)
- 2) Children come to the front of the carpet, take their picture/card, and walk to the center where they want to play.  
\*Teach this routine by demonstrating the expectations. A teacher can pretend to be a student and model expected actions.

## 2. Let them know what comes next.

When young children know what comes next, they feel a sense of security, and their likeliness to follow a teacher's direction increases, especially for those who struggle with changes. Visuals help them see the actual events and support retaining information.



(Individualized visual support)

## 3. Work with smaller groups.

Example A:

Take a small group of children at a time to the restroom. (Ensure that ratios are maintained)

Example B:

During mealtime, dismiss one table at a time to put away their trash.

Example C:

Sending children to centers by the colors of shirts, initial letters of their names, age, per row, use a magic wand, use a puppet to call their names, pick names from a mystery bag, use chant or song..etc..

#### **4. Give advance warning.**

When children engage in play, they are working to complete their agenda. The sudden transition might lead to some challenges.

Example: use a signal (bell/chime/flashing the room lights) and give a 5-minute warning before the actual transition begins (clean-up time, gross motor time, mealtime...)

#### **5. Utilize songs and chants.**

Create and frequently use songs, chants, and wordplays to denote specific transitions and expectations.

Example: Singing the “Clean Up Song” when it’s time for center clean-up.

#### **6. Facilitate an activity while waiting for others.**

Example:

While waiting for other students to join the group, play music and movement songs. (Freeze song, stretching activity, mindfulness activities, etc.)

Example:

While waiting for other students to finish a task and line up, play a game:

- Copy game (simply pantomime desired/silly movement silently, show series of photos)
- I spy
- Guess who? (A teacher describes a student)
- Guess what is in the bag? (A teacher leads the game by providing hints.)