

Transitions¹

What are Transitions?

For our purpose, transitions are defined as the times when children move from one activity to another. Common transition times are when children arrive at school or day care, meal or snack times, nap or bed times, and anytime there is movement from one activity to another.

Why Are Transitions Important?

- Transition times often invite misbehavior from children.
- Misbehavior with transitions is more likely to occur when:
 - Clear instructions are not given so children do not know what is expected of them.
 - There are too many children transitioning at the same time and in the same way.
 - There are too many transitions.
 - Transitions are too long and children have to wait with nothing to do.
 - There is no consistency on how transitions are implemented.
 - Children are expected to transition without warning.
- Some children have more difficulty staying emotionally regulated with transitions because of a disability or history of trauma, which can result in difficulties with problem solving, communication, or social-emotional skills.



¹ Adapted from Hemmeter, M. & Ostosky, M. & Artman, K. & Kinder, K. "Moving Right Along...Planning Transitions to Prevent Challenging Behavior," Young Child Journal (May 2008) National Association for the Education of Young Children. Retrieved Sept. 14, 2015 from http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200805/pdf/BTJ_Hemmeter_Transitions.pdf

What Can Be Done?

- Plan ahead
 - Design a daily schedule that allows for a limited number of transitions. Look to combine transitions.
 - Plan activities such as singing to keep children occupied during transitions and let children start the new activity as soon as they are ready rather than waiting. For example, sing songs or play waiting games during this time. If possible, allow children to start the new activity as soon as they are ready, instead of waiting for everyone to be ready before getting started.
- Fold snack times into other activities so children can eat when they're ready.
- Give a verbal warning five to 10 minutes before transitions happen. This helps children be ready.
- Pay attention to what is happening during transition times and make changes as needed.
 - At child care centers and schools, ask someone to watch during transition times, taking note of what adults and children are doing, and any misbehavior that occurs, including what triggered it.
 - At home, pay attention to what you and your child do during transitions. Giving some thought to what might have triggered any misbehavior will provide clues for finding solutions.
 - Design a transition plan using what you have learned. For example, it might be helpful to post an adult at the door to engage children in an activity when they line up. It may also be helpful to identify children who need additional support for transitions such as individualized reminders or visual schedule reminders.
- Use of interactive games and songs can help make transitions interesting and minimize the likelihood of misbehavior.
 - For example, while children take turns washing their hands, have another activity going on such as singing songs or reading books. When children finish washing, ask them to gently tap another child to signal that it is his/her turn.
- Teach children what to do during transitions so the expectations are clear.
 - Break each activity down into small steps that you will need to explain and model several times in different ways.
 - Post a visual schedule for different activities to help children learn the order and role-play each step.
 - After children have some practice, mix up the pictures and ask them to put them in order.
 - Children enjoy being the models for their peers. A child can demonstrate while you narrate the procedure.
- Post a visual schedule for different activities. This helps children learn the order in which activities happen, what comes next and prepare for transitions.
- Be prepared to problem solve individual solutions for children who continue to have difficulty despite your best efforts to follow these guidelines.



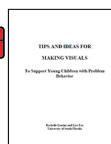
MORE INFORMATION



Moving Right Along...Planning Transitions to Prevent Challenging Behavior

From National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Reading this in print? Go to:
http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200805/pdf/BTJ_Hemmeter_Transitions.pdf



Tips and Ideas for Making Visuals

From the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children