

What is a Transition?

The term “Transitions” in early education refers to anytime children move from one activity to another. Consistent and predictable routines are essential for young children, as they help them to feel safe and secure in their environment. Intentional and developmentally appropriate use of transitions help teachers create a positive and supportive learning environment for children.

Plan for Smooth Transitions

Consider the timing, logistics and purpose of your transitions. Minimizing or eliminating wait time will help reduce challenging behaviors.

Examples:

- Divide tasks among teachers. One teacher helps children wash hands; the other sings with those finished.
- Dismiss children individually or in small groups.
- Some wait time is inevitable. Utilize songs, fingerplays and other fun activities to keep children engaged.

Integrate Content into Transitions

Consider learning styles and developmental domains when planning transition activities.

Examples:

- Sing songs.
- Use musical instruments.
- Use motor activities (hop like a frog, carry a ball with you for a quick toss/catch game).
- Integrate literacy and math (if your name begins with A...)
- Encourage leadership - have children lead the transition activity.
- Build and strengthen relationships (morning greeting rituals, I love you rituals, etc.).

Effective Use of Transitions in Early Childhood Classrooms

What are Quick Tips?: Concise guidance for Early Childhood Educators

Quick Tips provide early childhood educators, at all levels of practice, concise guidance on specific and relevant topics. Each Quick Tip is intentionally designed to inspire growth and learning, elicit reflection, and support best practices for all children and their families. Quick Tips content embraces inclusiveness across all topics and embeds inclusive practice throughout.



Help Children Learn the Daily Routine

While flexibility is important, children’s daily routines should be fairly predictable.

Examples:

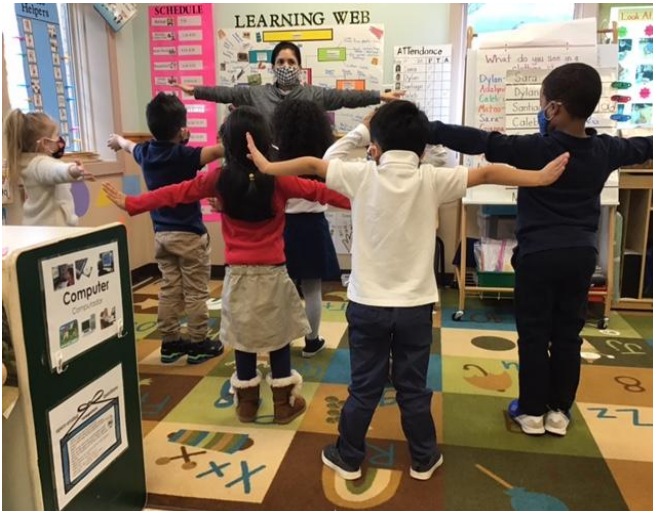
- Create a daily schedule which allows large blocks of time for self-selected play, active and quiet times, and eliminates excessive transitions.
- Post a picture schedule at children’s eye level and refer to it often.
- Involve children in discussions about expectations throughout the daily schedule.
- Provide children with a five minute warning (some may need additional support).
- Prepare children for transitions, especially for difficult ones (like clean up).
- Use environmental cues to signify transitions (turn off lights, turn on relaxing music before rest).
- Anticipate potential changes to the schedule and discuss these with children.

Early Educator Support Office



Reflective Questions

- Are clean up and other transition times stressful in your classroom?
- What is the behavior of the children like during transitions?
- Do your children know what they should be doing during transitions?
- How could you plan activities to strengthen relationships and/or extend children's learning during transitions?



NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development *Guiding Principles*

- Young children's learning is integrated and must address all domains. (GP#4)
- Children are active learners and they learn through play. (intentionally planning on-going experiences to promote hands-on learning, investigation and discovery. (GP #8)
- All children can learn and make progress. (GP#9)

Resources:

North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development

https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NC_Foundations.pdf?ver=2017-05-16-105950-953

North Carolina Early Learning Network
<https://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/>

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL),
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>

NC Professional Teaching Standards

- **Standard I, Element A:** Teachers demonstrate leadership in their classrooms.
- **Standard IV, Element C:** Teachers use a variety of instructional methods.

