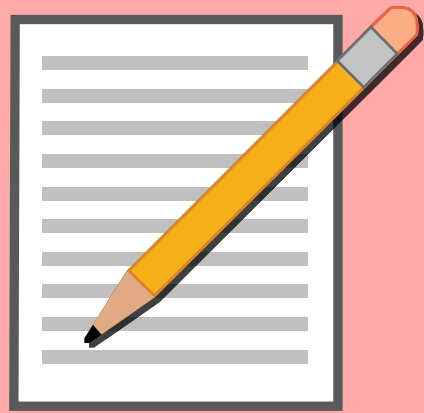


# **EFFECTIVE USE OF TRANSITIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS**

## **DEFINING TRANSITIONS**



## **PLANNING FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS**



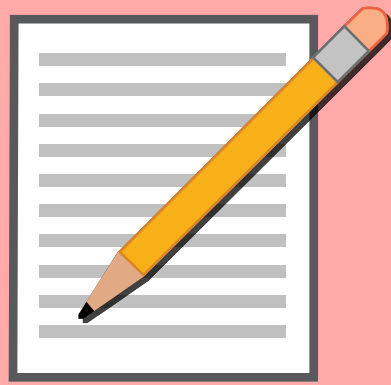
## **INTEGRATING CONTENT INTO TRANSITIONS**



## **COACHING CORNER**



# DEFINING TRANSITIONS



**Transitions in early education settings refer to any time children move from one activity to another.**

Many teachers describe transition times as some of the most problematic times of the day.



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.



# PLANNING FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS



**While flexibility is important, children's daily routines should be fairly predictable. When children know what to expect, they are better able to participate and transition successfully throughout daily activities.**

Create a daily schedule which allows for large blocks of time for self-selected play, active and quiet times, and eliminate excessive or unnecessary transitions.



Post a picture schedule at children's eye level and refer to it often.



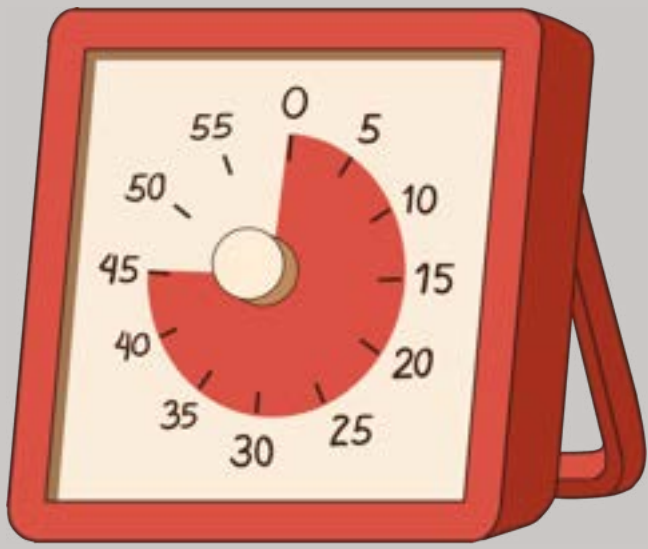
Involve children in discussions about expectations throughout the daily schedule.



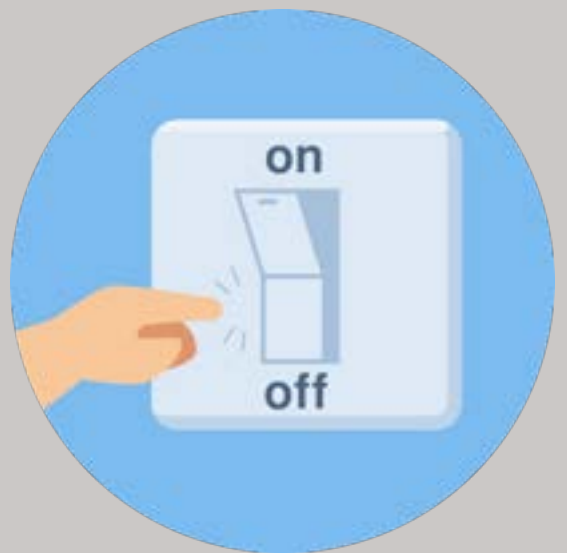
# PLANNING FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS



Prepare children for transitions, especially difficult ones like clean up. You can do this by providing children with a five minute warning ahead of transitions. Some children may need more individualized support.



Use visual and/or tangible supports to accompany verbal directions during transitions.



Use environmental cues to signify transitions. For example, turn off lights as an attention getter or use quiet music at rest time.



Anticipate potential changes to the schedule and discuss them with children. Using a visual calendar is a great way to prepare children for events outside of the normal daily routine.



# PLANNING FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS



Minimize wait time as much as possible. For example, do all children have to go to the bathroom or wash for lunch at once? If not, send a few at a time while the rest of the group is engaged in something else.



If wait time is necessary, spend it doing songs, finger-plays, and other creative movements or games.



Consider and plan for each transition. For example, dismiss children from large group to centers a few at a time so children aren't racing each other for a popular activity.



# INTEGRATING CONTENT INTO TRANSITIONS



**Utilizing transitions as a learning tool can be a natural way to integrate content into daily routines. Consider the learning styles, interests and goals of your children when planning transition activities.**

## Transition Activity Ideas

### LITERACY

- “If your name begins with A, line up/wash hands, ...”
- Play rhyming games (e.g., Willoughby Wallaby Woo) to dismiss children to the next activity.
- Clap your name/syllable game – “if your name has 2 syllables, get your coat from your cubby...”

**Willoughby Wallaby Woo**  
“Willoughby Wallaby Woo,  
An elephant sat on you,  
Willoughby Wallaby Warlos,  
An elephant sat on Carlos”



### DIVERSITY

- In the All About Me game, have children guess the friend based on clues about their unique interests or family members.
- Count the children in other languages, including the home languages of children in your classroom.



# INTEGRATING CONTENT INTO TRANSITIONS



## CRITICAL THINKING

- Play “I spy” to help children engage during wait times.
- Play “I am something, guess what I am” during wait times or while dismissing to another activity.



## GROSS MOTOR

- “Hop like a frog to the block area/bathroom...”
- “Move like an elephant to lunch.”





# INTEGRATING CONTENT INTO TRANSITIONS



## LEADERSHIP

- Allow children to lead various transitions.
- Plan opportunities for children to choose the transition song or activity



## MATH

- Counting: When lining up, count how many friends are at school. Ask questions like, “How many are friends are missing today?”
- Sorting/Classifying: Dismiss children by different attributes. For example, “If you are wearing green, you can line up.”





# COACHING CORNER



## Reflective questions to help teachers plan for smooth transitions

- Are clean up and other transition times stressful in the classroom? Why?
- What is the behavior of the children like during transitions?
- Do the children know what they should be doing during transitions?
- Have I adequately prepared children for the transitions, including visuals and other supports?
- How can I plan activities to strengthen relationships during transitions?
- How can I plan activities to extend learning opportunities during transitions?
- How can I incorporate the unique interests and characteristics of the children during transitions?
- Does the daily schedule allow for long, uninterrupted blocks of free play?
- Does the daily schedule provide opportunities for active and quiet play?
- Does the daily schedule minimize transitions as much as possible?
- Is the supervision adequate for the needs of the children during challenging transitions?

### Web Resources

- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations ([www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org))
- Conscious Discipline ([www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com))