

Transitions

In a single day, young children do a lot of transitions. It is the time, where under teacher direction, children move as a group between activities and routines, and it can sometimes be incredibly challenging. To decrease the likelihood of challenges and to move children as smoothly as possible through their day, special routines need to be well rehearsed and planned.

Strategies to support successful transitions include:

- Plan your daily schedule to include the minimal number of transition times possible.
- Consider what the children and Educators will do during these times (e.g., which Educator is responsible for greeting the children and who will begin looking at books on the carpet with children?)
- Prepare environments that support transitions - Consider how environments can be arranged as well as what materials in the environment will support transitions such as, adequate space for each child, sensory equipment, and educators at various stations to assist the smooth flow of the transition.
- Use visual cues/schedule - Post on the wall somewhere convenient to show children their daily routine. Get them involved by sticking the pictures with Velcro and getting the child to peel them off each time they finish a task.
- Prepare for changes in advance - When you help a child transition between activities, make sure you have their attention, with eye contact, then use a calm firm voice to let them know when the change is coming. Say things like 'Lunch time is in 10 minutes'.
- During The Transition - Sing songs, play word or guessing games, recite rhymes, or do finger plays with children so that the time passes more quickly when they must wait for lengthy periods of time for new activities to begin.
- Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity (e.g., the outdoor play followed by snack) and a good balance of active and quiet play (e.g., centre time followed by story time)
- Allow children adequate time to finish projects or activities so they do not become frustrated by activities ending too soon. Plan a space for creative projects to be placed or add 'work in progress' signs to activities, ensuring the children can continue the task at hand when the transition has been completed.
- Plan something for those children who finish an activity quickly so they are not waiting without something to do (e.g., if some children finish cleaning up and get to the large group quickly, might they look at books, puzzles or construction while waiting for other children to finish cleaning up?)

- Allow children to move individually from one area to another area when they complete an activity (e.g., as children finish snack, they are encouraged to go to the carpet and choose a book; as children finish putting away their coats and backpacks, they are encouraged to get a puzzle).

Pyramid Model Checklist This checklist encourages individual self-reflection and provides the opportunity for discussion between classroom teacher, families and the PSFO.

- Provide a whole class warning prior to transitions.
- Develop transition games, songs, or others to ensure all children are actively engaged in the transition.
- Specifically teach the steps and expectations for transitions
- Provide positive and specific feedback to children who transition appropriately.
- Provide individual prompts (e.g., verbal, visuals) to children who may have difficulty transitioning.
- Actively engage all students in the transition even those who are waiting for their turn.

Reflection

How can we make transitions more successful at our service?

What changes can we make to our environment for transitions to optimise learning opportunities for all children.

Individual Goals:

Further Reading:

Department of Education Victoria: Routines- Extraordinary learning in everyday experiences.

ACEQUA – Plan effective transitions for children

A successful guide to group times and transitions – PSFO Online Resources