

Change Doesn't Have to Be Hard: Daily Classroom Transitions that Support Learning

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Dawn Williams: Hi, everyone, and welcome to this month's edition of Teacher Time.

I'm Dawn Williams.

Kristin Ainslie: I'm Kristin Ainslie.

Dawn: And we are your hosts for Teacher Time. We're very pleased to have you all with us, here today. And today's topic is transitions in the classroom. Dr. Gail Joseph will be joining us, in just a moment. We're very lucky to have her with us here, today. She's been a classroom teacher. Now, she's an observer of teachers, amongst many other wonderful things. We're very happy to have her with us here today.

So, we have a new format. We are streaming live.

Kristin: Live. [laughs]

Dawn: Very live. Very live, and we're not nervous about that at all. So, right below your screen, you'll see a troubleshooting link where if you're having any problems during the webinar, just click on that link, and that should direct you to some help. There also is a chat box over on the right-hand side of the screen. You can use that to chat with us during the webinar. We'd love to hear from you to see how it's going. The office of Head Start is also tweeting on our behalf; so, if you happen to be in the position where you can tweet, you could use the hashtag #NCQTL and let us know about Teacher Time and how it's going.

So, we also want to know who is here today. So, you didn't have to register, before the webinar, but we have a place where you can sign in, and this is where we will record and register your attendance. So, it is right below your screen. Hopefully, you will see that sign-in box there. And then, we also would like for you, afterwards, to fill out the evaluation. That link is there, and it's not open yet. It'll be open for an hour after the webinar. And if you complete that evaluation and enter your email at the end, we'll be able to give you a certificate of attendance.

Kristin: So, we really want to hear from you; so, the evaluation is really an important piece for us. We want to know what you feel, how this experience is for you with Teacher Time. We want to make it the best that we can make it, for you as teachers.

So, last October was just a couple months ago. We had Gail Joseph on again. That was our first webinar. That was fantastic. She talked about emotional literacy and the importance of teaching feeling words to young children. And I want to know. If you noticed there was a slideshow or photo loop happening at the beginning if you joined us before the webinar began, and these photos were sent in by teachers who sent us activities, pictures of activities that they did in their classroom related to emotional literacy. And so, we want to hear from more of you. We really want to know what you're doing in your classroom, and if you send us photos, we will give you a little gift. We would love to have you participate with that. And the email address to send those to is ncqtl@uw.edu.

[Music]

Kristin: So, transitions – we are talking about transitions today, which is a big, big topic, and, you know, I know when I was a preschool teacher that that was a time of day when I really needed a lot of support.

Dawn: It really is, and it's surprising how much time you need to put into to prepare for those transitions.

Kirstin: Absolutely, absolutely. We're going to -- we're excited to have Gail on to talk about strategies.

Dawn: Mm-hmm. So, absolutely, children really do need support to get through transitions, and teachers can support themselves, as well. So, we want to throw out a question for you all, and it's going to be a poll question. You'll see that pop on your screen, momentarily. And the question is: Do you know how much time children spend in transition during their preschool day? All right, so that poll should be popping up in just a moment, and all you have to do is click on that link, or click on one of the options there and highlight that.

[Music]

Kristin: So, those results are really, really interesting. It looks like a lot of children spend a lot of time in transition, which I think is -- you know, happens in many, many classrooms. So, Gail, what do you think about those poll results? That's a lot of time.

Gail Joseph: I think it is a lot of time. I actually also think that we might even underestimate sometimes how long children spend in transitions. I know a pretty powerful thing to do as a teacher -- and I did it as a teacher, and maybe, you did, too -- is to actually kind of time yourself how long children are spending in transition -- you know, the beginning of the transition, when they end the transition. It's pretty revealing and pretty surprising.

And, of course, the issue isn't just that they're spending time in transition; it's that when they're spending time in transition we see an increase in challenging behaviors, which, again, why it might strike fear in the hearts of teachers, but we also just lose some learning time. I mean, four hours a week of lost learning time can occur, if children are kind of lingering in those transitions. So, I think the good thing is that we've got a lot of ideas of how to structure those transitions and make them more effective for children.

Kristin: Good, excellent. Well, I am excited that you're here, Gail, and I was really pleased to have you on in October, and so back again, today and we can't wait to hear what you have to say about transitions.

Gail: Alright. Well, thank you, so much for having me again. It's so lovely to be here and to be on Teacher Time, again. So, we wanted to talk about transitions, because we do know that children -- that there's a lot of challenging behavior that can occur in transitions. We know that teachers can get pretty frustrated around those transition times, and so we wanted to talk about some practical strategies for how we can support children and structure those transitions, so that children actually spend less time in transitions and the time that they do spend might be time that they can be learning.

Kirstin: Excellent.

Gail: Alright, so I want to start -- I have a few slides to show, so, I wanted to start with -- before we get to, actually transitions within the day, I want to talk about the schedule, because if we don't have a good schedule set up, then transitions are going to be an uphill battle for us. So, these are probably, I'm guessing, reminders to our audience, our listeners today, because they are all teachers and they probably know this; so they can take a time to pat themselves on the back, when they recognize what I'm about to say.

So, the most important thing to have in place is a consistent and predictable schedule that is available to children in a developmentally appropriate way. I'm going to talk a little bit about what that means, but, basically, when children can predict what's going to happen next, when they feel like they know that this is going to end here; this is where I'm going next; this is where I'll go after that; it gives them a sense of security; it lowers their stress levels. And when we do that, we can create a calmer classroom, decrease challenging behaviors. So, consistent, predictable schedule; things happen in a similar rhythm, similar kind of routine every day.

So, another thing that I know our listeners know well -- and they can pat themselves on their back again -- is that it's a great idea to alternate these active times, vigorous times with less active experiences. Sometimes, our children come to our Head Start classrooms -- maybe they've been on a bus for a long time; I know in some rural settings or even some urban settings that children might -- that come on a bus. They might be on that bus for quite a while, or maybe they're in a car for a while or on a city bus for a while. However they're getting to our programs, they might have already been sitting for quite a bit of time. So, sometimes I see schedules that are sitting for a bit of time during that transportation. They come in; they sit down for breakfast. Then, they sit down for circle time. They sit down for small group time -- a lot of sitting for our young learners that need to be active and kind of doing some more hands-on active activities. And so, we want to alternate those things.

So, maybe children come in and they first get to run around for a little bit on the playground and then come in for breakfast. And then, maybe they're going to go do something outside and then they come in for circle time. So, we just want to think about that, as well. And then another thing that people probably are already thinking about is establishing routines within routines. So, for your daily schedule you want to set it up so that the activities happen in a similar, predictable sequence. But we also want to think about, gosh, within these practices or these activities that happen -- say circle time or large group time -- let's establish a rhythm or a routine within that routine.

So, before I get to that routine within routine, I just want to show you this is a picture of a schedule, and it's actually one I'm very familiar with because it came from my classroom many, many years ago. Yes, yes, but I like what we did here, because it was at the children's eye level. So, this was a schedule for children to follow, right? And so, it wasn't something that was up by the clock where just adults looked at it. It wasn't put on the back of a door, so that as soon as I open the door in the morning no one could see it, anyways. It was really there for children to kind of follow, and it has the pictures or symbols of what activities were going to happen.

And then there's this other added piece, which I think is helpful. I think we learned this along the way that it's helpful for children, and that is when we're done with an activity we would turn it around. Right? So, this is in a little sentence chart, and we could flip it around and say, "OK, we're all done with circle time. Now, it's time for small group". "All done with small group -- now, it's time for story time." So, children would just have a really good sense of what's happening next. It's a nice support. Pictures, visuals are always a nice support for young learners, really helpful for young learners with -- who are learning English as a second language or for our young learners that might just need some more support. This is a great strategy for that. Little tip: I like to have the child that's going to have the most difficult time following that schedule be the one that gets to kind of turn these things around, right? Gives them a little bit extra ownership of that and just helps them kind of have a little bit more control. OK, we're all done with circle time. What's going to happen next? OK.

Kristin: That's great.

Gail: That's great. So, it's also moveable, so that if there was going to be a change in that schedule, we could alert children to it, right? So, I could say every day since she's been coming to our Head Start classroom, after we eat breakfast we go outside, but today it's going to be different; we're going to eat breakfast and we're going to go get on a bus, because, we're going on a field trip. Right? So, I can give them kind of a heads-up of how the predictable routine might be a little different today. Okay, routines within routines. I talked a little bit about this, but this is this idea of creating a rhythm within a routine.

So, let's say that there's circle time -- large group time -- some people call it -- and one helpful hint here is to have that run in almost a similar schedule itself. So, maybe every time we come together in a large group we sing a hello song; we look at the job chart; we read a book; we do music and movement. We choose learning centers and that's it. Happens in the same way every time. We can actually even provide a picture of that for children to follow, right?

So, here it is, hello song and do calendar. They're going to sing a song, read a book. Doesn't mean the same song, you know, for nine months. Doesn't mean the same book for nine months. They can be different, but the routine happens in the same way.

Kristin: Yeah, the same, yeah.

Gail: So, for a child who's kind of nervous about that transition, unsure about what's going to happen next, they can start to internalize that, ah, this is how we do this. I know that we're done with the song, we're going to read a book, and then, I get to go outside -- my favorite thing. OK? So, that's about the schedule. So, let's talk about the transitions.

So, transitions are hard, and they're hard for a variety of reasons. One reason that they're very difficult for children is that there's just a lot of wait time to them, right? So, when we're waiting and we're not -- our hands aren't busy; we're not busy, engaged in anything, we can create our own entertainment, and often times, that's challenging behavior that, behaviors that teachers might find challenging. And so, we want to make sure that we can eliminate some unnecessary wait time. And I'm going to talk a little bit about that.

But the other thing that can happen with transitions that can make them really challenging is that they're almost always adult-directed, right? So, I always say in all the classrooms I'm in -- and I'm in a lot of classrooms; in all the classrooms I've been in, I've never seen a four-year-old say, you know: "it's 10:30. I'm going to put my favorite toy away and wash my hands for a snack" or whatever it might be. So, they're often adult-directed, which kind of sets up some tension there, anyways; but another thing that can make them challenging is that children just might not know what to do during a transition time, right?

So, transitions, there's a lot of movement. Not everyone's doing the same thing. It's difficult for me to maybe pick up on what it is that I'm supposed to do. So, another hint is to teach the expectations during transition time -- we'll talk about strategy for that in a moment -- to use pictures and other consistent salient cues; we're going to say what that is in a moment -- as well as my very favorite kind of go-to transition strategy, which is to provide choices. All right, so let's talk about eliminating unnecessary transitions and wait time. So, one thing to ask yourself is: Is the transition necessary? Right?

So, I've been in some classrooms where teachers have imbedded some maybe extra transitions they don't need to. So, for example, I was in -- observing in a classroom once where the routine or the schedule said that the children went from free time to outside, but what the teacher had done is said, "OK, after free time, I'm going to ring a bell and it's time for clean up", but she would have all the children come to the center to hear it was time to clean up. They'd go back and clean up. They'd come sit down at their small group table, wait to be dismissed to line up and go outside. Just not necessary, right?

Kristin: That's a lot, yeah.

Gail: Let's think about how we can eliminate some of those transitions. So, you just think about your own schedule and have I, accidentally, imbedded too many transitions there? Another way to eliminate some of that wait time is to think, is the whole group transition necessary? So, any time I take 18 children from outside to wash their hands, at the one sink and, then, to sit down, I've created a lot of wait time; so, whole group transitions often mean wait time, too much wait time, so we want to eliminate those. And another thing -- this is kind of maybe contrary to how we think about teaching practice -- is to eliminate wait time by beginning when just a few children are ready with a motivating activity. So, this might be, ring, ring, ring, it's time for circle time. A few kids come over.

Now, what often happens is a teacher might wait until everyone's there, right? They don't want to start their lesson until everyone's there. So, they wait and they wait, you know: "Come on over, Johnny. Come on over, Fena, Batta; Come on over. We're waiting for you. But what I would suggest instead is to say: "Ring, ring, ring --Time for circle time," and then say, Helen's here at circle time. I'm going to let her start with a musical instrument or I'm going to blow bubbles for kids at circle time. So, starting with something that's motivating and fun reinforces the children who followed that transition and motivates others to come get ready. All right.

This is just a picture of a teacher who's doing a great job where she's -- the transition is to line up to go outside. Lots of kids need some extra support getting their coats and backpacks on ready to go home, but she's blowing bubbles for the children that came right away. All right, I'm going to go pretty quickly through this -- teaching expectations during transition time. One of the resources we'll talk about is a planning sheet for transitions, and what you can do -- this is a very helpful strategy -- for the teaching team to get together and to actually think about what are all the transitions children need to do during the day? What do we want children to be doing, and what should the adults be doing, during that time, to support them? And so you describe what the behaviors are for the children, describe what the adults should be doing, and then you want to think about how we're going to teach this. Are we going to model it at circle time? Are we going to reinforce it while we're walking down the hall?

Here's a little picture of, just a glimpse of what it looks like, and you're going to -- our viewers today will be able to click on the resources and see that, as well. And then, I want to just hit on using pictures and other consistent and salient cues to signal a transition for children; so, using a consistent cue that says a change is coming. So, I'm going to ring a bell. I'm going to hit a drum. Maybe, I'm going to play some music, and that always means for children that a change is coming, right? I like things that can be activated. I don't like to always use my singing voice. It might be because I don't have a lovely singing voice. Children don't like me to start singing, but I don't want to always use my singing voice because children need a lot of extra help during transitions, and if I'm the only one singing the song getting that transition going, I can't provide individual support.

Kristin: Right, right.

Gail: So, I like something I can ring a bell, I can hit a drum. Here's another cue as to -- or another hint here is to show children pictures of where they're going to go next. And I know you're going to share some of this, so I'm going to just say these transition cue cards are great. And I know you're going to talk about those.

Kristin: Yeah, we are.

Gail: I'm going to end with one last strategy, here, that is incredibly helpful, I think, when you're doing transitions. It's kind of my go-to strategy here, and that is if children have a difficult time making a transition is to provide them with a choice about how they're going to complete the transition.

Kristin: OK, OK.

Gail: So, let me just emphasize, here, it's not whether they're going to do the transition or not.

Kristin: Right. Right.

Gail: Right? So, it's not, you know, do you want to go home on the bus or not, because you're either then, you know, dragging a child down the hall who has thought they made a choice to not.

Kristin: Calling their parents.

Gail: Calling their parents, explaining why they need to pick them up. You know, so it's not that, but it's instead kind of how you're going to complete the transition. So, it might be, instead, of do you want to go on the bus or not, it might be, do you want to sit by the window or behind the bus driver? Do you want to use the blue or the red crayon to write your name? Do you want to clean up the unit blocks or the farm animals? And then one of my very favorites is, do you want to do it by yourself or can we do it like a team? Right?

So, and that just kind of really emphasizes that we could do it together like a team. I can help you and you can make that choice, right? So, that's very different than: "Do you want to do it by yourself, or I can help you, right?"

Kristin: Right, right.

Gail: So, it's let's do it like a team.

Kristin: Oh, I love it.

Gail: So, it's a great strategy to use. So, thanks.

Kristin: Oh, thank you, Gail. Thank you, very much for all of those and, I'm actually going to -- we are going to talk about, a little bit more with you. We're going to show some videos that will show some teachers going through transitions.

Gail: Oh, what a great idea.

Kristin: And then I'd love to ask you some questions about what we see in the videos.

Gail: Love to.

Kristin: Because, there's a lot of great things happening out there.

Gail: OK, good. I'm very excited.

Kristin: And I just -- I love the key messages that you talked about. I love the making the choices, giving children choices. That's, I think, just fantastic and eliminating the wait time for children and giving something -- giving them something to do while they're waiting. I love that. And so, the first clip that I'm going to show is showing a teacher, and she is giving very, very clear directions to children before the transition begins. So, it just looks like there's a lot of pre-planning that went into this; so we'll watch that and then I'll ask you some questions.

Gail: All right.

[Video begins]

Teacher: That's right. She said it. We were quiet and he came out. Oh, I'm thrilled with this small group, you guys! This was so much fun!

Child 1: Let's make him come out again.

Teacher: Well, you know what? We've got to go over and check out our book and let the other group see this crab. They have not seen him yet. OK? All right. So, listen to the directions. This is how we're going to move from this small group to the next small group. Listen to me. Ms. Danielle, if you'll go stand about midway on that line, and I'm going to call my boys. Stand up, push in your chair, and line up behind Ms. Danielle. Boys, I have two -- Maria, oops, see, she's helping you. You're a girl. Two boys at my table line up behind Ms. Danielle.

[Video ends]

Kristin: So, Gail, I love that video because --

Gail: That's excellent.

Kristin: I just see a lot of great things happening there, when the children are transitioning from one small group to the next.

Gail: Yeah. It looks so smooth, and what I love about it is there's no time lost around -- you know, children aren't wandering. They aren't experiencing challenging behavior. She does great strategies. She's got clear behavioral directions. You know. We're going to listen to the directions. Boys are going to go first. And she also helps guide her -- the co-teacher that's there, right? She gives her a direction, too.

Kristin: Right, right.

Gail: You know, you're going to -- please, go wait over there, and then we're going to -- so, I don't think this just happens. I think she had to plan it.

Kristin: Right. And that's really -- I think a question for you is do you recommend teachers plan these out? I mean, I think, when I was beginning teaching, I never really thought of that.

Gail: Right. We plan all our lessons, but we don't really think about what that transition's going to be and that is one of the best strategies that I think we can provide to people that are listening, today, is to use that planning sheet to think about what the transitions are, and to, even just be mindful about, you know, gosh, we're going to do this fun activity with clay, today at the table.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah.

Gail: And then to think, OK, and how am I going to transition the children to the next one? Am I going to ask them about, you know, the kids with brown shoes can go or the kids with sneakers can go next, or any of those things.

Kristin: Right. So, really think about those. That's great.

Gail: Being very planful.

Kristin: Good. Excellent. Thanks. All right. So, our next clip, we're going to watch is the -- is a teacher who, again, transitions children from circle to lining up. I believe they're going outside, but she does a really nice job of fitting in learning time in the transition.

Gail: OK. Let's watch.

Kristin: So, we'll watch that. Yeah.

[Video begins]

Teacher: If you have on the color red, go line up. If you have the color black on, go line up. If you have the color green on, go line up.

Child: No one -- Easley!

Teacher: Go line up Easley. You have more like a lime green. If you have on purple, go line up. Two purple friends. Very good lineup, my friends. Whoo-hoo! Whoo-hoo!

Children: [Laughter]

Teacher: OK. Are we ready to see how many friends we have here today?

Children: Yes.

Teacher: But first, can you guess how many are here before you count? How many, you think?

Girl: Seven?

Teacher: Seven? We got seven.

Boy: Twenty-one.

Teacher: Twenty-one friends? Six friends?

Girl: Twelve.

Teacher: Twelve? Thirteen? Well, let's find out. Well, let's find out. Let's find out. We're going to find out how many is here. You ready? Let's go ahead and count.

Teacher and students:

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12.

Teacher: So, how many are here?

Students: Twelve.

Teacher: What two numbers make the number 12? Uh-oh, Carlos, what two numbers make 12?

Carlos: One and two.

Teacher: A one and two. Now, wait a minute. If Habib comes, how many friends will we have here?

Students: Thirteen.

Teacher: Thirteen. Now, what two numbers will make that?

Students: a one and a three.

Teacher: One and three. You guys rock and roll all the time. Give yourselves a clap. [Clapping]

[Video ends]

Kristin: Great. So, I really like that clip. There's just so many things that I could ask you about, because I just love all of the things that she does. And just to speak about the learning -- the work on the learning goals that she works into that transition, do you -- How can teachers do that? Or how does that really happen?

Gail: Well, let me just start, by saying, Kristin, I think that was great.

Kristin: I loved that. [Laughs]

Gail: She was so fun. Using her fun voice.

Kristin: I love it.

Gail: She was very, you know, and just engaging and fun. What a wonderful teacher. So, yeah, she embeds some great learning goals, right? Like counting. We're going to count and that which number -- which numerals make up that number. What if they have one more? These kids are doing math while they're doing this transition, which is really lovely.

Kristin: It's really nice.

Gail: And so that's one of the other things we can do during our transitions. It's a great time to embed a little learning goal, right? Great time to do that.

Kristin: Yeah, that's really great. You have a captive audience and --

Gail: You have a captive audience.

Kristin: You might have to have a little wait time, right? But, why not make the most of it?

Gail: Yes, right. Right. Instead of just spending that wait time trying to manage children's behavior, right, keep your hands to yourselves, stand up straight, do that kind of thing, you could play lots of games. You could have them have their bodies represent kind of how big numbers were, or how little numbers were, right? Like I'm going to say a number and I want your body to be -- you know, if it's a big number, be big, and if it's a small number, be small. You know, you could do that and have children kind of practice number magnitude. You can ask children to recall something that they read that day. I mean, like there's so many things that you can do.

Transitions are a great time to put in a little learning goal, because there's also this natural kind of time when we're leaving and moving on to the next thing that children have this what we call behavior momentum in place, and they want to keep going, and so, if you just say, hey, tell me one thing that the wind blew from the book? And then and they can recall. Or I'm going to come up with a word, 'boy.' When we walk out, tell us a rhyme with boy. Right? So, as the kids are transitioning through that door.

Kristin: I love that.

Gail: So, great time. What a great teacher! Thanks for sharing that video.

Kristin: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. That was great. So, we've got one more to share with you.

Gail: Excellent.

Kristin: And so, this teacher, has again -- similar to the previous teacher, she inserts some learning goals with them. And she also gives them something to do while they're waiting. They're waiting for children to come out of the bathroom, which is always a big transition, from washing their hands. So, let's watch this teacher.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Get your hands down. [Makes sound] Show me one.

Girl: One.

Teacher: Oh, don't get tricked. Ok. Hands down. I'm going to try it again. Don't get tricked. Show me three.

Children: Three.

Teacher: Oh, good work, Johas. Ok, hands down. I'm going to trick you again. Don't get tricked. Don't get tricked. Show me five. Way to go, you guys. We are ready to walk in for free choice. [Singing] We are the dinosaurs, marching, marching.

[Video ends]

Kristen: So, Gail, another great video of teacher Fanny. We know this teacher here at the University of Washington, and she is giving children, again, something to do while they're waiting. So, they're holding up their fingers to represent the number she says, they're playing a little game, and then, they're marching in a song.

Gail: Yeah.

Kristin: So, how does this kind of thing help with kind of managing children's behavior?

Gail: Right. And I think, you know, similar to the other teacher, just great strategies of thinking about what am I going to do while children are waiting. So, sometimes children do have to wait, right, in our transitions. You know, we might be in a situation where the children all have to use the restroom down the hall. I couldn't let children go by themselves. I couldn't -- you know, so they all go by themselves to that, and then they -- and or all they all go together, and then but there was going to be some wait time. And so, this teacher has been thoughtful about what am I going to do while children are waiting.

Again, I'm not going to spend my time just trying to manage their behavior: Stand up straight, be quiet, that kind of thing. But instead, I'm going to engage them in something fun. We're going to like do some number recognition, some subitizing. She's going to --and then, of course, she sings that lovely song, too -- keeps them engaged, keeps them moving. So, just another great, you know, teaching strategy that she's using.

Kristin: Yeah, it's exciting to see all those. I could show 20 clips, but we don't have the time, of course.

Gail: Right, right, right.

Kristin: So, thank you, Gail. We are going to see you in just another moment. Dawn and I are going to talk about some resources in just a little minute here, but and we're going to have you back on in just a few minutes.

Gail: All right.

[Music]

Kristin: All right, welcome back, everybody. And I just want to say, too, if you're just joining us, please remember to take a moment and sign in so we can capture everybody who is here. So, hi, Dawn.

Dawn: Hi.

Kristin: Hi how are you?

Dawn: Great.

Kristin: So, there was really so many great transition ideas and strategies that Gail talked about, and we want to share resources with you all out there, so we're going to take a moment and give you four really important resources that you can use.

Dawn: All right, so the first one is on the ECLKC, NCQTL has their website, and there's a 15-minute In-Service button that you can press, and that will take you to our 15-minute In-Service Suites. So there's a couple of them there that are really helpful for transitions. One is "Classroom Transitions", and the other one is "Zoning". So, please check those out. And, teachers, you can actually do a little 15-minute In-Service for yourself. If you watch that five-minute overview video and then download the tips for teachers, you can learn some of the new strategies Gail was sharing with you earlier.

There's also the beginning teacher series that is brand, spanking new. Your ECs are just getting access to it this week, so you can contact your supervisor for that series, but there's a planning for learning unit that is particularly useful for talking about classroom transitions. Then, there's also the Center for Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning. We talked about them quite a bit last month when we did emotional literacy, but there's a transitions module that they have that also is chock full of great information and resources about transitions. And then there's the Head Start Center for Inclusion, and we have a lovely key ring here of some of the visuals that you could use there, and this -- these are really helpful for individualizing transitions for children. It's a key ring. You can print out those visuals and laminate it, and we know the teachers that carry them in their pockets and show them to children who might need some individualized supports. So, there's another one for you.

Kristin: Yeah, you can just flip through, and the great thing about Head Start Center for Inclusion, too, is that they have all of the visuals that are available there are all free. They're downloadable. Hopefully, you have heard about Head Start Center for Inclusion before, but, these are very easy to make. We just cut them out, laminated them, stuck them on a ring. I see lots of teachers who just have these sort of hanging up in different areas of their classroom so that they can just grab them and show pictures to show pictures to children who may need that.

[Music]

Dawn: So, next, we are going to transition into resiliency and wellness. We're so excited you're here to do this with us again. Last time we talked about gratitude, and we even heard that someone was going to do a gratitude journal with their class.

Gail: Oh, that's awesome.

Dawn: And put it up on a Post-It Note and during circle do that, so we're so happy to have you here with us today to do that. So, what are we doing for Resiliency and Wellness today?

Gail: Well, so, again this is one of my favorite things to talk about, because I think I realized when I was a teacher I was always so stressed, always, so kind of multitasking – lots of things, lots of kind of worries could kind of flood into my mind, right? I had so much to do, and if the children were having some challenging behaviors, behaviors, I just had so much stress. And we know that for teachers that they can experience a lot of stress, and that stress can lead to some burn out, and we want our teachers to be well and happy to do the work that they do.

So, I want to give you another tip that I've learned and I'm using quite a lot of, which is something called the mindful stop. And I actually -- my hunch is that the teacher that we just saw that stayed so calm is somebody that probably actually practices being calm. So, being calm is not just a disposition; it's something that we can actually practice and get better at.

So, let's talk about this idea of a mindful stop. So, a mindful stop is just when I'm feeling really stressed, really overwhelmed. There's a lot going on -- maybe I'm worried, I'm having memories, I'm like -- I'm cramming for things. I'm just in so much stress in just daily life, and then you throw in, you know, being responsible for, you know, 18, 20 little bodies. It's pretty incredible. So, what's a mindful stop? A stop is when we're feeling really stressed and overwhelmed.

We just imagine stop, which is to stop what you're doing for a moment, to take a deep breath, to observe -- just observe what's going on. What am I thinking? Not to judge the feelings or to act on the feelings or the thoughts, but just to observe. Wow, I got a lot going on. Yeah, feeling worried about that. And then once we're feeling calm, to proceed positively. Now, I think another great metaphor for this is one that -- I'm so grateful one of my doctoral students actually suggested this to me, and now I've seen that it's a really common metaphor -- Megan Fry, that is -- and it's a really common metaphor a lot of people use, and that is to have a snow globe. And so let me just tell you how you might think about this.

We have a couple of snow globes here -- one of Seattle and one of some penguins here. It doesn't matter what's in the snow globe, but the idea here is to think about a mindful stop, to think about the snow globe. So, when the snow globe, when we're feeling stressed, when we've got a lot to do, it's like the snow globe is totally shaken up, and all of this flurry is our constant worries, our multitasking, the demands, the stress that we're feeling. And that's kind of how it feels, right? And so when we're taking a mindful stop, we're just stopping, and we're taking a deep breath, and we're just observing. The snow is our thoughts and our worries. We're just observing them and we're letting them settle as we're taking deep breaths. We're just watching them settle. Don't have to do anything about them. We don't have to judge them. We just let them settle. And when they're settled, we're feeling calm; we come back and proceed positively

So, it's something to practice on a regular basis. It's going to stay settled, until someone shakes it up, right? And so it's not magic. It's not going to be there forever, but when it is shaken up again for you, you can just settle again. So snow globes. And I always like to remind, in the height of anger is not the time to bring up the snow globe activity to someone, right?

Dawn: [Laughs] Right.

Gail: Because, this would not feel good being launched across the room. This is something you need to practice proactively, and it would be great for children, too, right?

Dawn: Oh, yes, yes. Yeah, every once a while at circle time, let's do a little snow globe. Practice being calm; if I practice it -- it's more likely to come to me in the moments like that teacher that we saw.

Dawn: That's right. I feel better already. Can you just show up and do that for me when I need it, please?

Gail: Absolutely, watch the snow settle.

Dawn: Wonderful. OK, so we have one more special message that we want to give.

Gail: Yes, absolutely. So, we did talk about gratitude and the importance of having gratitude and expressing gratitude. In just one little moment, we just want to express gratitude to someone really special to us which is Jim O'Brien, who is our federal project officer for the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. We just want to say thanks to all he's doing and all he's done. He's actually retiring at the end of this month -- a great, long career doing good things for children with disabilities and for Head Start in general, and we just -- we will miss him, and we wish him well, and we just want to express that gratitude.

Gail: Thank you, Jim.

Dawn: Thank you, Jim.

[Music]

Dawn: Thank you, Gail for that. I just -- my soul feels better.

Kristin: Yeah, that was fantastic. I love that. I'm going to buy it. I'm going to take these with me today. So, it's -- yeah, it's time for us to wrap up.

Dawn: It is.

Kristin: I can't believe it, but it's time for us to wrap up. We're going to close today, and we just want to remind you that if you have not signed in, please do so, and as well as the evaluation piece is so critical to us so that we can know your experience with Teacher Time and what you'd like to see in future months of Teacher Time.

Dawn: That's right. So join us again next month on January 17th. We'll be back again, and Gail is joining us again. We're very excited about that. We also, again, want to hear from you. So, please do send in your photos and lesson plans and activities. Just don't include any adults or children in those photos just for confidentiality reasons, but please do that and send those to NCQTL@uw.edu, and we will have a little gift for you.

Kristin: All right, great. Well, thank you for joining us, everyone, and we'll see you next month.

[Music]