

Supporting Dual Language Learners With Classroom Schedules and Transitions



Children who are new English learners may need some additional support with classroom transitions, since they may not yet be able to understand enough English to follow your directions. The strategies below will allow you to provide dual language learners (DLLs) with ways of understanding and participating in classroom transitions that are not dependent on understanding and speaking English.

Follow a consistent and predictable classroom schedule and routine.

- ▶ Post a schedule that uses pictures, photos, or graphics, as well as words, to describe each activity.
- ▶ Review the schedule with the children at the beginning of the day so they know what to expect.
- ▶ Keep the routine as similar as possible day to day.



Provide consistent, shared activities to mark transitions.

- ▶ Before or during transitions, use simple, repetitive songs or chants that children can easily learn and sing as they are learning English.
- ▶ Before or during transitions, use simple motions or actions that all children can do together (e.g., a quiet sign).



Be clear about your expectations during transitions.

- Understand that your expectations will be new and unfamiliar to many children; for example, some of them may never have needed to stand in line, take turns, sit in a circle, or be quiet.
- Spend time modeling your expectations during transitions and supporting children in practicing how to do transitions.
- Use verbal and nonverbal supports (pictures, photos, or graphics) to help children learn your expectations; for example, hold up a picture of the behavior you are expecting to see.



Use the home language to help children understand schedules and transitions.

- Explain the schedule and transitions using the home language, if you speak that language.
- Learn and use basic words or phrases in the home language, such as “bathroom” or “circle time.”
- Include a home language on the classroom schedule if there is a dominant home language other than English in the classroom.

