

## Managing the Classroom: Classroom Transitions

Narrator: Welcome to this short in-service suite on classroom transitions. In this module, you will learn about some effective strategies or methods for helping children make smooth transitions from one classroom activity to the next. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning uses the House Framework to organize the components of high-quality teaching that contribute to positive child outcomes. This in-service suite focuses on the foundation of the House, and specifically the well-organized classroom.

In well-organized classrooms, children and adults move efficiently from one activity or routine to another. Children make many transitions every day in their early childhood classrooms. Every classroom has its own schedule of activities. Regardless, the children move from activity to activity; from circle time to the interest areas to the playground and back inside to use the bathroom, wash hands, then eat at the snack table, and regroup again for story time or music, and on and on. Transitions can be stressful. Children may spend too much time waiting. And problem behaviors often occur during transitions. But there are ways to make transitions go more smoothly, and even ways to make them learning opportunities.

To help plan for better transitions, it can be helpful to think about what to do before the transition, during the transition, and following the transition. Here are a few things to think about before the transition. Plan a daily schedule of activities that minimizes the number of transitions the children need to make, particularly the number of transitions in which all of the children have to do the same thing at the same time. And include your transition plan in your schedule. Plan ahead so that the adults in the room know their role during the transitions. And plan and prepare cues, including visual supports, that help children understand what's expected during the transition.

[Video begins] Teacher 1: Where would you like to go? What's that called again?

Girl 1: The kitchen.

Teacher 1: The kitchen. What are you going to do in the kitchen?

Girl 1: Cooking.

Teacher 1: You're going to do some cooking? Okay. Maybe next to you, I can see something that you're cooking. [Video ends]

Narrator: There are also some ways that teachers help children during the transition. They sing songs or play word games with the children while they are making the transition. They also allow children enough time to finish or store their work before moving on to the next activity. And they plan for those children who finish quickly or get to the next activity early. Give these children something to do while they are waiting for the rest of the children, or make sure there is an adult ready to receive them and get the next activity going.

[Video begins] Teacher 2: Are you using the computer or are you writing on the lap board?

Girl 2: I'm writing on the lap board.

Teacher 2: Okay, so let's take your pass over to the cozy area. Take your pass with you to the cozy area, alright? Because someone else may want to use the computer. Okay? [Video ends]

Narrator: Learning how to make transitions can be difficult. During and after the transition, be sure to acknowledge the children's efforts by providing positive attention and words that tell them you recognize their appropriate transition behaviors, such as cleaning up and putting things away and stopping one activity to move on to another. The children are learning how to be a part of a group and how to follow the routine. Let them know you appreciate it. Transitions can be the most stressful and challenging times of the preschool day. But by planning ahead, making a schedule that eliminates unnecessary transitions, and using music, games, pictures, and more, teachers can make the day go more smoothly and help children become more confident and independent as they learn the classroom routine.

Check out our tips for teachers and useful resources to fill your teacher toolkit with ideas you can use. Thank you for listening.