

# Transitions & Routines

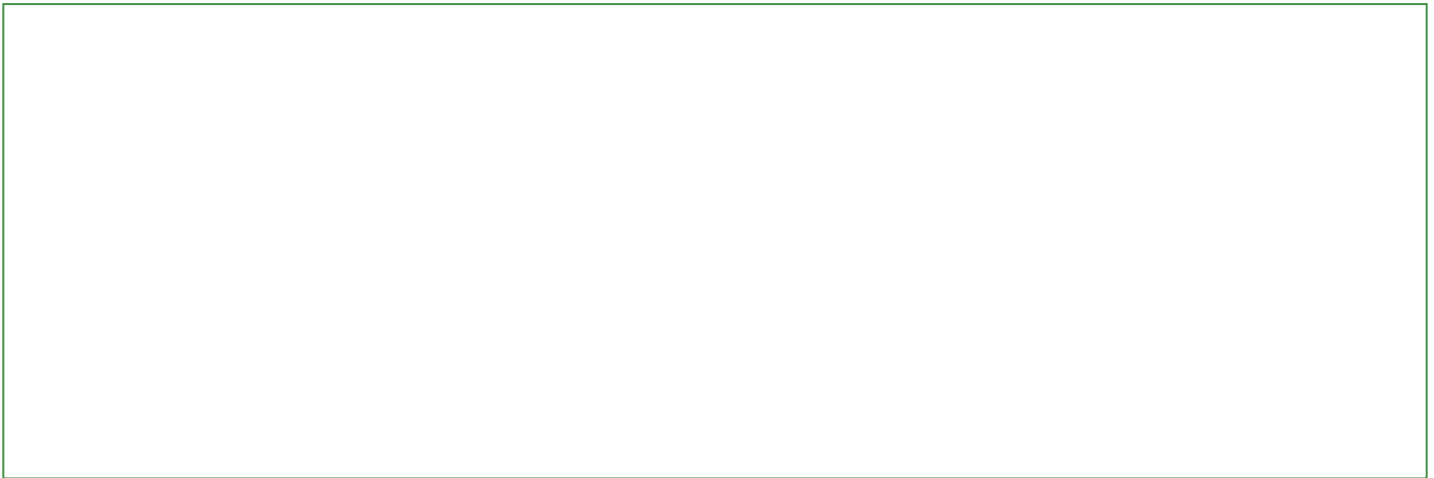
*Language, Literacy and Social-Emotional Development*

**Goal:** To provide workshop participants with supports for managing transitions and improving routines in early childhood settings. To make Transitions & Routines more positive and more productive.

**What is a Transition or Routine?** Any time that is not core instructional time:

- Transitions = *movement between activities*, such as moving from centers to playground.
- Routines = *repetitive activities*, such as brushing teeth, lining up, washing hands, etc.

➤ **Map out your Daily Schedule:**



## **Why work on Transitions and Routines?**

Transitions and Routines:

- Have **potential for chaos**; may feel out of control, loud and messy.
- May feel **less structured** to children.
- Are times when **expectations may be unclear**; children may not know how you want them to behave or move between different activities.
- Are key learning opportunities because they **provide repetition and practice** – they happen every day and at predictable times. There are lots of opportunities to get it right!

*And...*

- **Build Language & Literacy Skills:** Children are interacting and communicating with each other; peer-to-peer language is occurring naturally. Adults can make this a more intentional learning opportunity by designing and supporting specific types of language interactions between children.
- **Build Social-Emotional Skills:** Children are faced with social-emotional challenges – because it is unstructured time, conflicts or issues may arise (children are in each other's space, taking turns in

line, pushing and grabbing, etc.). Adults can make this a more intentional learning opportunity by designing and supporting specific types of social-emotional interactions.

➤ **Identify the Transitions and Routines across your day:**

*Examples of Common Transitions and Routines:*

- *Greeting/ Arrival*
- *Circle or Story Time (whole group)*
- *Transition to Centers (small groups)*
- *Transition out of Centers (clean-up)*
- *Lining Up to Wash Hands, Find a Book, Go to the Bathroom, etc.*
- *Lunch or Snack Time*
- *Brushing Teeth*
- *Walking in Hallways, Walking to Playground, etc.*
- *End of Day/ Departure*

➤ **Reflect on the Transitions and Routines across your day. What are the “hot spots” when you want things to move smoother, more quickly, or with less noise/conflict?**

**What Works?**

- **A specific task and learning goal** – give children something concrete and engaging to do.
- **Clear, concrete expectations** – tell children how you expect them to behave/act.
- **Consistent and predictable** – do the same thing every day.
- **Positive feedback** – give immediate and specific praise when children are doing a good job.
- **Visual supports** – provide picture cards or other cues to help children who need more support.

**Things to keep in mind...**

It takes time to establish a new routine.

- Be **consistent** and keep doing it every day, even if children don't get it right away.
- Keep teaching the routine: keep **explaining and modeling** what to do. Even if it is clear to you, it may not be clear to all children what they need to do in order to be successful.
- It is normal for young children to need a few weeks or months to practice.

Use 5, 2, or 1-minute warnings before each transition.

- This helps all children be successful.
- Especially for children with a behavior plan, let them know when a transition is coming and tell them what they can do/earn for positive behavior.
- Example: "In one minute we will go to the playground. The playground is exciting, but I don't want you to run. You can earn a sticker for walking the whole way."

Some kids will still need additional support.

- Posters, picture cards, hand signals, and other visual supports are helpful reminders for concepts like "quiet voice," "hands to self," and "no running."
- These are particularly helpful for younger children, English Language Learners, and children with specific behavior challenges.

**What would this look like? Examples of effective strategies and supports:**

**Give children something to do while lining up or waiting in line**

- pretend to carry a heavy rock or animal
- act out a concept you are learning
- sing a song and finger play while waiting
- trace the letters of your name
- trace the alphabet



**Sing a song to help children remember directions, a series of steps, or multiple pieces of information**

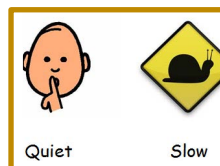


	Cool Kid	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Brain Game	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Challenge	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The Big Q	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Celebration	<input type="checkbox"/>

A **Daily Schedule Board** to let kids know what is happening and when; check off activities as you go

**Give children a specific task to accomplish together**

- collect or pass out materials
- hold a poster of "quiet voice"
- use a timer or stopwatch
- give a **Daily Q**: partners think about a question, share answers at destination



**Children can use visual supports** as a reminder for specific behavior expectations. Create 3-4 classroom sets of key picture cards.

- **Identify and clarify your expectations for children.** Transitions often require children to use multiple complex skills that adults take for granted (i.e., focus, memory, self-control). Reflect on what you are asking children to do. Be specific, detailed, and concrete. Explaining in clear terms what is involved in a transition will help you design a strategy or support to help students be more successful.

*Skills often required during Transitions:*

- *Listening carefully to new directions*
- *Remembering multi-step information*
- *Ignoring distractions (sights, sounds, peers, adults)*
- *Resisting desires/impulses and instead follow a plan*
- *Dealing with the frustration of having to leave an activity earlier than desired*
- *Dealing with unexpected conflict like the need to find or share materials, bumping into other children*

- **Problem-solve the “hot spots” in your day. What supports can help children be more successful during these Transitions; how can you design or improve the Routine?**