



Promoting Social Emotional Competence Adapted for Kindergarten and Grade 1

Session 6: Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities Presenter's Script



Slide 1

1. Introduce the speakers and today's topic.

Slide 2

1. In this session, we will be focusing on creating quality supportive classroom environments.
2. Well-designed environments support children's appropriate behaviors and make it less likely that children will need to engage in challenging behavior.
3. In addition, environments can be designed to teach children expectations and to promote their engagement and interactions.



Slide 3

1. There are 3 main types of transitions:
 - Transitions between activities within a given setting (e.g., snack to playground; outdoor recess to large group)
 - Transitions between multiple settings on the same day (e.g., school to after school program; between classroom and special classes)
 - Transitions between programs (e.g., birth-three programs to preschool, preschool to elementary school)
2. We will focus on transition between activities



Slide 4

1. Transitions take a great deal of time
2. During transition time, children often spend much time waiting (e.g., wait until everyone has finished snack, wait for buses)
3. Some children (and adults) have stressful and frustrating experiences during transitions between activities (e.g., children arguing over who took out what toys and should put them away; children not knowing where to put certain toys when they are done with them)
4. Skills such as cleaning up, and lining up may reduce transition times and lead to more time for children to become engaged in learning activities
5. As children become independent and are taught what they "should be doing," we are less likely to see problem behaviors.



Transitions

- **Minimize** the number of transitions that children have during the day.
- **Minimize** the length of time children spend waiting with *nothing to do*.
- **Prepare** children for transitions by providing a *warning*.
- **Structure** the transitions so that children have something to do while they wait.
- **Teach** children the expectations related to transitions.
- **Individualize** supports and cues.



Slide 5

1. Challenging behaviors often occur during transitions, especially when all children are expected to do the same thing at the same time and then end up waiting with nothing to do.
2. To ease transitions, our goal should be to:
 - Minimize the number of transitions that children have during the day.
 - Plan transitions so that there is a minimal amount of time spent in transition and that children are highly engaged during the transition.
 - Give children a warning before a transition occurs.
 - Minimize those transitions during which every child has to do the same thing at the same time (Does every child have to go to the bathroom at the same time? Could snack be part of center time?).
 - Structure the transition so that children have something to do while they are waiting (e.g., finger plays, songs, guessing games). Provide some children with chores, and give children helping roles during transitions (e.g., handing out the paper towels, holding the door, helping a friend).
 - Teach children about the expectations for transitions. This instruction can occur during a group time and should be reinforced throughout the day.
 - Individualize the instruction and cues provided to children. Some children will make the transition with a minimal amount of support, while others may need a picture schedule, verbal prompt, adult assistance, or some other type of cue.

Transition with Visual and Timer



Slide 6

1. Using a timer as a countdown to the end of an activity is a good visual cue for the child to ease into a transition.

Transition with Visual



Slide 7

1. What support does this environment provide for a transition to outside recess?
2. Possible ideas:
 - Where do you line up (on feet)
 - How do you walk (like apes – since you are lined up on ape feet – or whatever types of feet are there!)
 - You do not go out the door without a teacher (stop sign on door)
 - You stay out of the play area (behind the fence)

Transition with Choice



Slide 8

1. Children can be given a choice in transitions – you can line up on the 7 or the 2 but it is time to line up now!

Transition with Visual Choice



Center Transitions



Strategies that support smooth transitions between activities

Before the transition-

- ✓ Plan your schedule to include a minimum number of transition times
- ✓ Consider what the children and adults will do during these times
- ✓ Provide verbal and nonverbal cues before transitions
- ✓ Teach children the expectations for the routine
- ✓ Minimize the number of transitions in which all children have to do the same thing at the same time

Strategies that support smooth transitions between activities

During the transition-

- ✓ Sing songs, play word or guessing games, recite rhymes, or do finger plays with children
- ✓ Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity and a good balance of active and quiet play
- ✓ Allow children adequate time to finish activities
- ✓ Plan something for those children who finish an activity quickly so they are not waiting without something to do

Slide 9

1. Circle time choices can be put on a file folder for children to select.
2. This can be helpful for children who wander or have difficulty staying engaged during center time. (You saw the teacher use this during the hula-hoop transition video: she showed it to the children when they are making their choice of activities)

Slide 10

1. Transition between centers can be eased with entry & exit systems
 - Children select a visual cue (necklaces, as above; cookie cutters, wrist wraps, craft sticks) to enter a center
 - A center is "full" when no visual cues remain
 - Children return the visual cue when done with the center

Slide 11

1. There are numerous strategies that support smooth transitions between activities
2. Examples of strategies you can do *Before* the transition-
 - Plan your daily schedule to include the minimal number of transition times possible.
 - Consider what the children and adults will do during these times (e.g., which adult is responsible for greeting the children and who will begin looking at books on the carpet with children?).
 - Provide verbal and nonverbal cues before transitions (e.g., "5 minutes 'til snack," "It's almost time for clean-up," show pictures of the next activity, ringing a bell). Teach children expectations such as which shelves hold which blocks.
 - Minimize the number of transitions in which all children have to do the same thing at the same time (e.g., Do all children have to go to the restroom at the same time? Can some children come over to the rug and get ready for large group while others are finishing an activity?)

Slide 12

1. Examples of strategies to use *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 have to wait for long periods of time for new activities to begin
 - Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity (e.g., outdoor play followed by snack) and a good balance of active and quiet play (e.g., center 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 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 getting to large group quickly might they look at books while waiting for other children to finish

cleaning up?)

Strategies that support smooth transitions between activities

After the transition-

- Provide positive attention or feedback to children following smooth transitions.
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions.



Optional Activity: Transition Troubles

List the "Trouble Transitions" in your classroom.

- Briefly explain why these transitions are difficult.
- What changes can you make in your transitions to reduce the challenges?**
 - Can transitions be minimized/eliminated?
 - How can children be engaged in the transition?
 - What are the behavior expectations? How will you teach them?
 - Do individual children need extra support/cues?

Activity: Action Planning

Think of the transitions that take place in your classroom throughout the day

- Is there anything you can do to modify transitions to support the children in your classroom?

Think of a child who has more significant challenging behavior

- What could you do modify your transitions to help support that child?

Questions?



Slide 13

1. Examples of strategies to use *After* the transition-

- Provide positive attention or feedback to children during AND following smooth transitions (e.g., the times that children pick up toys without much prompting tell them how this shows how well they take care of their "things" and how much you appreciate their working independently).
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions (e.g., "Nicholas and Jorge did a great job cleaning up the block area.").

Slide 14

1. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Introduce the activity. Allow participants time to complete.
2. Share 1-2 good ideas per classroom for transitions.

Slide 15

Refer participants to their Action Plans and give time to complete. Review with whole group.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **What Works Brief #4 – Helping Children Make Transitions Between Activities**
- **Transition Tips and Tricks**
- **Planning Transitions Articles**