



Classroom Transitions: Effective Strategies

Transition is the passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another : CHANGE
Transitions may be difficult for young children. Developmentally, they're simply not well-equipped to leave an activity they're enjoying and move to a potentially less desirable one.

Theresa Vadala, Ed. D.



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PRESCHOOL Module 3

CDA Subject Area 3: Supporting children’s social and emotional development

Title: CDA SOC.EM 3.B Classroom Transitions: Effective Strategies

2 Hours

0.2 CEUs



**Dr. Theresa Vadala
(Instructor & Curriculum Designer)**





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Learning Assessment

Read the material provided, take the 5-10 quiz questions and
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Questions?

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Child Care Training Consultants LLC., Goal

The goal is to empower educators as they take Child Development Associate (CDA) courses to make a powerful difference in the lives of young children!

Mission Statement

“Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s is committed to provide research-based professional growth and development training courses primarily focused on the Child Development Associate. The CDA is the nation’s premier credential that is transferable, valid, competency-based and nationally recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United State Military.

Vision

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s vision is to provide the early childhood community with courses based on CDA competency standards to obtain their CDA Credential and assist in reaching their goal as an exceptional early childhood educator to ultimately achieve higher child outcomes.





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About the Instructor

Theresa has over 30 years experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. During that time, she served as a Preschool Teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, Program Facilitator, and Director of an Early Childcare Program. She has a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with Specialization in Curriculum and Instructional Design. Theresa is a Professional Growth & Development Trainer and Curriculum Designer and offers web-based courses internationally. She is the Executive Director/Owner of of the training organization Child Care Training Consultants, LLC., (CCTC).



Business Description

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC. (CCTC) is an accredited provider (AP) with the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEU) for adult education nationally. The business is also a recognized training organization with the Council for Professional Recognition, Child Development Associate Council (CDA), National Credentialing Program.





Learning Objectives & Outcomes

Learning Objectives

By the end of the training participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize mixed transitioning messages children learn from adults
- 2) Identify their own values as they work with young children given the resources from the Classroom Transitions Training Course
- 3) Implement clear communication skills between adult care providers and the children in their care
- 4) Organize an early child care facility environment to minimize conflict during transitions

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the training participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize 2-5 mixed transitioning messages children learn from adults
- 2) Identify their own values as they work with young children.
- 3) Identify clear communication skills between adult care providers and the children in their care





Agenda

- Understanding what transition means
- Scenarios
- Children with autism
- Individualize transitions
- Ideas for transitioning with ease
 - Verbal Cues
 - Routines





Transitions

Transition refers to a change

- Types of transitions:
 - Transitions between activities
 - Transitions between multiple settings
 - Transitions between programs





Transitions

In a childcare setting, transition help children finish an activity or routine of the day and move on to another one. Because we are often asking a large group of children to do the same thing at the same time, transition times can often be the most chaotic.

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., preschool

- to after-school child-care program; Head Start program to child care)

Transitions between programs (e.g., birth-three programs to preschool,

- preschool to elementary school)





Scenario: What Is the Problem?

Michelle is a 3-year-old girl. She enjoys playing in the kitchen center and interacting with friends. When the teacher announces that it is time to clean up and sit on the carpet for group time, Michelle gets very upset. She throws toys and pushes other children. When the teacher comes near her, Michelle starts screaming and saying that she is not finished playing.





Possible reasons for Michelle's behavior:

- The time is too short and Michelle barely gets into her play when it is time to clean up
- She needs more warnings to anticipate cleanup time
- She does not like group time (it might be too long, too difficult, etc.)
- She does not understand what it means to “clean up”—how and where to put the toys away





Scenario: What Is the Problem?

Jim, a 4-year-old, is a new preschool student. He and the other preschoolers in his classroom are playing on the playground. When Miss Johns calls them to go inside, they all gather next to the entrance door. Jim stays in the sandbox. When Miss Johns approaches him and asks him to come with her, he starts crying and screaming, then drops to the ground.





Possible reasons for Jim's behavior:

- Jim is new and does not know the schedule
- The time is too short, and Jim barely gets into playing in the sandbox when it is time to clean up
- Jim needs more warnings to anticipate cleanup time
- Jim does not like the activity that follows outdoor recess time
- Jim does not know why Miss Johns wants him to come with her and assumes he has done something “wrong”





Transitions take time

- Children often spend a lot of time waiting
- Transitions can be stressful and frustrating
- Skills such as cleaning up may reduce transition times
- When children are taught what they “should be doing,” we are less likely to see problem behaviors
- Many preschool teachers consider children’s ability to independently make transitions a key skill





Transitions take time

During transition time, children often spend much time waiting (e.g., wait until everyone has finished snack, wait for buses)

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)

Skills such as cleaning up toys and lining up may reduce transition times and may lead to more time for children to become engaged in learning activities

As children become independent and are taught what they “should be doing,” we are less likely to see problem behaviors

Many preschool teachers and other caregivers consider children’s ability to independently make transitions between activities one of the essential skills needed in group contexts such as kindergarten and preschool.





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





Before the Transition

There are numerous strategies that support smooth transitions between activities.

Examples of strategies you can use 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 cleanup,” show pictures of the next activity, ringing a bell). Teach children expectations such as which shelves hold which blocks

Minimize the number of transitions during 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?)





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





After the Transition

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





Promote Independence During Transitions

- Allow children to move individually from one area to another area when they complete an activity
- Teach children to help one another
- Help children self-monitor during transitions





Promote Independence During Transitions

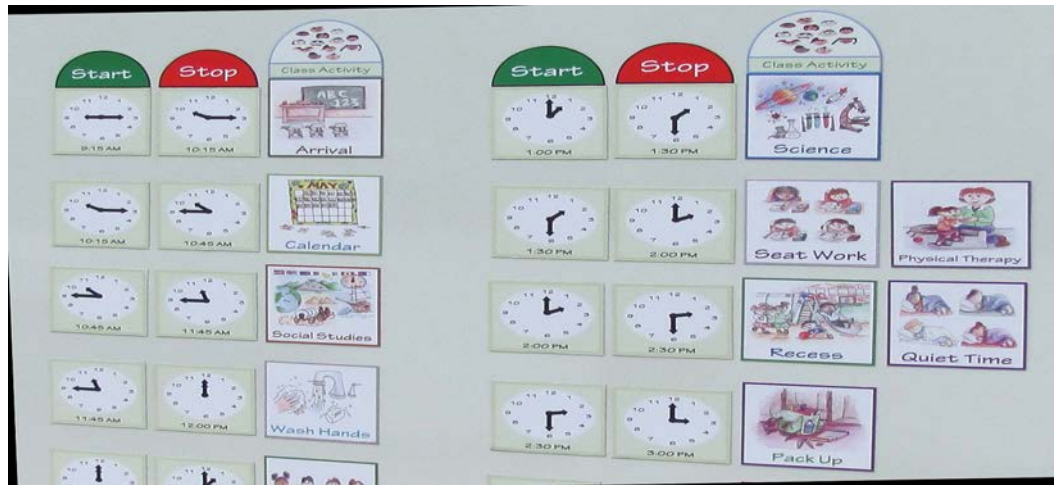
- Allow children to move individually from one area to another area when they complete an activity (e.g., as children finish snack, they are encouraged to go to the carpet and choose a book; as children finish putting away their coats and backpacks, they are encouraged to get a puzzle)
- Teach children to help others (e.g., have children move as partners from one activity to another or ask one child to help another child gather his/her backpack)
- Help children self-monitor during transitions (e.g., children can be asked to think about how quietly or quickly they moved from one activity to another).





Individualize Transition Strategies

- Provide support to children during transitions





Individualize Transition Strategies

Provide support to children during transitions:

- Photos to help anticipate what activity is next
- Directions given in a child's home language or sign language and individual warning to a child that soon it will be time to clean up and begin a new activity
- Support may need to be individualized (i.e., one child may
- need an adult to provide a 5-minute, 3-minute, and 1-minute
- warning before cleanup while the rest of the class might only need a 3-minute warning)





Transitions and Autism

- Reduce transition time
- Increase appropriate behavior
- Less adult prompting





Transitions and Autism

Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) may have greater difficulty in shifting attention from one task to another or in changes of routine. This may be due to a greater need for predictability, challenges in understanding what activity will be coming next, or difficulty when a pattern of behavior is disrupted.

A number of supports to assist children with ASD during transitions have been designed both to prepare children before the transition will occur and to support the children during the transition.





Strategies for transitioning children with ASD

Cueing

- Verbal
- Visual

Transition Cards





Strategies for transitioning children with ASD

Cueing children with ASD before a transition is going to take place is also a beneficial strategy. In many settings a simple verbal cue is used to signal an upcoming transition (i.e. “Time to eat now”, “Put your math away”, or “Come to the carpet for circle time”).

This may not be the most effective way to signal a transition to children with ASD, as verbal information may not be quickly processed or understood.

In addition, providing the cue just before the transition is to occur may not be enough time for children with ASD to shift attention from one task to the next.

Allowing time for children with ASD to prepare for the transitions, and providing more salient cues that children can refer to as they are getting ready to transition may be more effective.





Transitioning Strategies

- Visual timers
- Visual countdown



Visual Countdown





Transitioning Strategies

It may be helpful for children to “see” how much time remains in an activity before they will be expected to transition to a new location or event.

Presenting information related to time visually can assist in making the concepts more meaningful.

Like the visual timer, a visual countdown allows children to “see” how much time is remaining in an activity. The countdown differs, however, because there is no specific time increment used. This tool is beneficial if the timing of the transition needs to be flexible. Teachers deciding to use this strategy need to make a countdown tool. This can be numbered or colored squares or any shape or style that is meaningful to the individual.

As the transition nears, the teacher will take off the top item (i.e. the number 5) so the individual is able to see that only 4 items remain. The teacher decides how quickly or slowly to remove the remaining items depending on when the transition will occur. Two minutes may elapse between the removal of number 3 and number 2, while a longer amount of time may elapse before the final number is removed. Once the final item is removed, the children are taught that it is time to transition.





Transitioning Strategies cont...

- Visual schedules
- Use of Objects, Photos, Icons, or Words
- "Finished" Box





Verbal Cues

- Before
- During
- After





Verbal Cues

Verbal cues are an absolute necessity when encouraging your child to transition from one activity to the next. Cueing should take place before, during, and after the transition.

For example:

Before: After this tower, well put the blocks away so we can have lunch

During: Time to put the blocks away so we can have lunch

After: Nice job putting the blocks away! Now its time for lunch

Of course, real life doesn't usually happen this smoothly, and that's okay. Children aren't always going to like the fact that they have to stop something that they're enjoying.





Verbal Cues continued...

- Use verbal cues that children can understand
- Use picture schedules and cards
- Establish and maintain regular schedules and routines
- Allow for adequate time





Verbal Cues continued...

ALWAYS use verbal cues before, during, and after a transition.

Use verbal cues that children can understand. Young children don't understand abstract time frames like 5 or 10 minutes. Use concrete references like, Three more times down the slide. Then, help the children count reminding them how many times are left after each turn. Then remind the children several more times before the end of the activity.

Picture schedules and cards can be helpful for children who have a hard time following verbal directions. Pointing to the picture of the next activity or handing children the picture and letting them carry it to the next activity can be helpful in transitioning. Sometimes kids simply don't understand or can't process the verbal direction alone.

This technique can be particularly helpful in classroom settings.

Establish and maintain regular schedules and routines.

When children know what to expect and can anticipate upcoming transitions, they can maintain a sense of organization and order leading to smoother transitions.

Allow for adequate time for children to engage in their preferred activities without interruption.





Routines

- Children need routine
- Daily Schedule
- Consistency





Routines

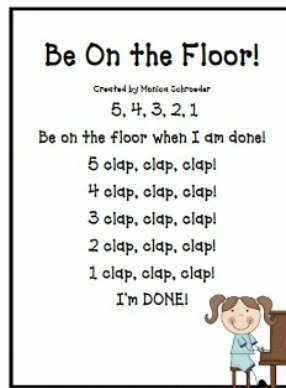
Children thrive in a well-ordered and predictable environment, where daily routines such as arrivals and departures, mealtimes, nap times and toileting are dealt with consistently by all caregivers. Daily routines provide opportunities for children to learn more about themselves, the world and other people. Daily routines also offer children a sense of stability, and a feeling of warmth and caring from their teachers. The challenge is to develop appropriate daily routines for children which offer them a sense of consistency and security yet remain flexible and responsive to the individual needs of each child.





Review

- Understanding what transition means
- Scenarios
- Children with autism
- Individualize transitions
- Ideas for transitioning with ease
 - Verbal Cues
 - Routines



Transition times are important because they can make the day seem smooth and well-organized, or rushed and unpleasant. Allowing enough time so children make the transition gradually is the best way to avoid stressful situations.

In addition to allowing a realistic amount of time for transitions to take place, it always helps to warn once in advance before a change in activities.

This gives the children a chance to finish what they are doing, and their cooperation is more likely. It might also help move the process along if we comment favorably about the next activity and avoid situations where all the children are expected to do the same thing at the same time.





References/Resources

- <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/?pageId=399>
- http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200805/pdf/BTJ_Hemmeter_Transitions.pdf
- <http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/providers/little.html>
- <http://www.zerotothree.org/>





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