



Tips for Transitions

When we think about your child's school day, there are several times where they must be able to transition from one activity to another, or one location to another. These may include:

- Separating from caregivers upon arrival to school
- Moving from one activity, center, or location to another
- Sitting down at circle time
- Clean-up time
- Lining up
- Going outside
- Coming inside from the playground
- Transitioning back to caregivers at the end of the school day

Working on transitioning activities helps promote your child's self-regulation. They know what to expect and when to expect it. This helps them participate in their daily schedule and helps develop their social-emotion skills. Here are a few ways to help with transitions:

1. **Provide visuals.** Using visual boards like "first and then" boards, or pictures of a daily schedule are beneficial for all children.
2. **Establish routines.** Routines are comforting for children and promote independence.
3. **Limit transitions.** When possible, try to limit the number of transitions during the day.
4. **Make a plan.** Think about what the adults and children will be doing during the transition. Will there be a transition song to sing? Does your child need a transition object to carry?
5. **Be realistic.** Many children struggle with transitions – especially during preferred activities. Make sure they have enough time to finish their projects and activities before having to transition to something else.
6. **Give advanced warning.** Provide verbal and visual cues to prepare your child for an upcoming transition.
7. **Know what to say.** Your child may struggle with transitions. Validate their feelings by saying, "I see you are sad. You love puzzles. I know you want to keep playing, but it's time to go outside. You can play puzzles again after nap time." Then show them the visual schedule and offer them choices or give them a special job to do.
8. **Praise success!** When you see your child doing well with transitions, praise them! Say, "I like the way you cleaned up your toys and sat at the table."