



Environment: Tips for Smoother Transitions

Transitions can be challenging for children. Explaining what is next or using a familiar song or game can help children move more easily from one activity to another and provide opportunities to practice communication.

Give a warning when a transition is about to happen. “In two minutes we are going to clean up. Then, we will have lunch.” Children will be better prepared to stop their activity, clean up, and move on to the next activity.

Use a visual to show children what is next or what they should be doing. Hold up a cup if it is time to transition to lunch. Show them a bottle of soap or a picture of handwashing if they are getting ready to wash hands.



Talk about the positive behaviors you see during transition. “Daniel is waiting at the door.” “Mel knows just where to go for diaper change.”

Reduce “wait time” during transitions by being prepared and announcing the transition at the right time. If children must wait, provide an activity to do while waiting. Look at books, encourage children to talk about what they want to do when they go outside, or involve them in transition activities, such as cleanup or putting on shoes.

Sing familiar songs during transitions between activities. Use these songs to teach language. For example, “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” or the “Clean Up” song can become a familiar “cue,” but also

provides children opportunities to engage in communication with adults and peers.



Environment

Organize and plan to promote communication & interaction



Some children may need extra time to transition due to physical or social-emotional needs. Think about how other caregivers or children can help. Have a plan that everyone is aware of.