

TRANSITIONS

Transitions occur when children have a change in schedule or routine or when they must adapt to an unfamiliar setting or environment. It's important to prepare children for changes to support social-emotional development. When transitions are well planned, they can make the day seem smoother and well-organized. Allowing enough time so children make transitions gradually is the best way to avoid stressful situations. Transitions can come in many different forms and some may be planned while others may be unexpected.

Planned transitions or everyday changes are activities that you have control over, such as:

- New children entering the program
- Changes in a child's learning space within a program (room to room)
- Children exiting the program
- Moving from one scheduled activity to another
- Daily arrival and departure from program

Unplanned transitions are changes you do not have control over, such as:

- Emergencies
- Lunch arriving late
- Rainy days
- Teacher absence

Things to consider:

- Am I aware of the emotional needs of the children in my care when it comes to transitions?
- Am I preparing the children with a verbal warning that one activity will be ending before another one starts?
- What strategies do I have to assist those children needing more support?
- Am I having conversations around unexpected changes to our routine/schedule to prepare children?

Tips for Timing Transitions

-  Choose your timing to create a natural flow from one activity to the next. This will decrease the amount of start and stop times children encounter.
-  If children find transitions particularly challenging, consider allowing more time for the transition.
-  Be flexible by finding ways to make stopping easier such as allowing children more time to complete work or saving the work for another time.
-  Singing songs and giving transitional warnings will allow children to internalize and better prepare for the change that is coming.

Engaging Families In Transitions from One Environment to Another

Educators and families work together on a plan to create an appropriate transition with procedures of how a child will move from one age group or learning environment to the next. Involving family input allows the plan to be individualized to meet the developmental, social-emotional and cultural needs for each child. Communication between all parties throughout the process will ensure the child is supported both at home and in the program. Some children may need more support than others.

Best Practice: Transitions Between Environments

- Families should be involved in the planning process and documentation of the transition.
- Transition documents should be individualized to better meet the social and emotional needs of the child.
- Transition documents should be signed by the family and provider.
- Typically, a short visitation schedule that allows time to gradually increase over the course of the week will be implemented.
- Having introductions and welcoming the family into the new environment allows all parties to begin the relationship building process.
- Updating the family on the child's progress will help them feel more secure and comfortable with the change.
- Programs should follow the child's lead and comfort level during the process and implement modifications as needed.



EXERCISE:

What strategies do you have in place if the unexpected happens such as:

- Lunch is late
- A teacher calls off
- An emergency arises
- A field trip is cancelled
- Inclement weather

★ For transitional ideas or activities please see the Best Practices section beginning on page 43.