
Teacher Pages



Reflections

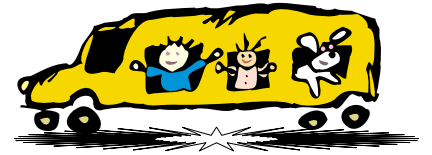
When you think of transitions, what feelings come to mind?

Do you recognize some transitions as more difficult than others? What makes them difficult?

Are some students more affected by transitions than others?

Have you shared any of your best ideas for effective transitions with other teachers?

Transition Times



Whether teaching tiny tots, feisty fours, or fabulous fives, all teachers must deal with transitions on a daily basis. There is simply no way to avoid or get around them. *Webster's* defines transition as a passing from one condition, form, stage, activity, place, etc., to another. Because this passing between activities is inevitable, it's important to have it run smoothly—taking up little time from other important learning moments and minimizing children's frustration levels.

Children live in a world of adult timelines. We ask them to stop playing and join circle, finish eating and go outside, clean up the art table and meet in the science center. Whether a child is finished with an activity or not, we often expect them to move on to other things that we feel are important and necessary for them to do. Sometimes the changes we expect from children are met with unenthusiastic behavior or resistance. When a teacher feels the need to meet an agenda of daily activities, a handful of dawdling or unwilling children can throw the whole day into an experience that feels chaotic and overwhelming. Teachers who remember that the children, and not the curriculum, are the focus can turn transitions into learning times without feeling that daily objectives were unmet.

Why are transitions difficult?

One of the reasons transitions are difficult for children is because these young learners have not developed the ability to look ahead and predict what comes next. They frequently become absorbed in an activity, and the idea of leaving it behind and moving on to something else comes as a complete surprise. A change in activity during the very moment a child is building a skyscraper—focusing intently on adding one more block to the tower—shakes the attentive child out of her world and into

ours. This surprise can be jolting and upsetting. When children are absorbed, they often are not considering the things that come next in

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