

Reducing Time Spent in Transition

What is a Transition?

A transition is a prolonged period of time in which most of the class is **not** involved in a learning activity.

Common Types of Transitions

- Breaks when one activity has ended but another has not yet begun
- Times that children can't begin an activity because they are awaiting instructions or materials
- Interruptions of activities that result from teachers gathering materials or correcting behavior
- Times that children are moving to a new location (i.e., going outside, lining up for restroom breaks)

Benefits of Reducing Transition Time

Think of the time spent in a classroom as a pie chart in which every moment is accounted for. If a large “slice” of the day is spent transitioning, less time is available for other important learning opportunities.

Data collected in
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Early Learning Center

Reducing time spent transitioning leads to:

1. Fewer instances of problem behavior
2. Higher levels of involvement in learning
3. **More time available for instruction**

Children who spent **more time in instructional activities** made greater gains in **Math** and **Early Writing Skills**. These results were even more pronounced for children with lower entering skills!

Reducing Time Spent in Transition

“Tune Up” Your Transitions!

BEFORE

1. Make a Plan

Coordinate roles with Paraprofessional or Co-Teacher.

Where will each of you be positioned? What will you be doing?

Try filling out a transition matrix to help plan transitions between daily activities.

4. Incorporate Learning Activities

Sing a Song

Use Mighty Minutes®

Begin next activity as soon as a few students are ready

AFTER

5. Debrief

Give students positive, specific feedback about what went well during the transition

Check in with your co-teacher at the end of the day. Don't be afraid to adjust parts of the routine that aren't going smoothly!

Check in with students to make sure directions are understood:

“What’s the first thing we do when the lights go out?”

Use the lights, timers, songs, clapping to cue students that transitions are coming

Experiment with timing: 10 minutes, 5 minutes, 3 minutes, 1 minute

2. Review Expectations & Cues

DURING

3. Support Individual Students

Use visuals so students know what to expect

First/Then chart, photos of next activity

Involve peers to help with transition

“Buddy System”

Translate cues into native language or sign language

Adapted from Stephanie Kirby, Ross Early Learning Center (2016)