

Sensory and Sensibility



Issue #6

Time to Go! Easing Transition Time

Transitions are among the most difficult times of the day for some students. *Transitions require flexibility and executive functioning skills.* Up to 25% of a school day may be spent engaged in transition activities. A variety of factors may contribute to these difficulties during transitions, including:

- Problems in understanding the verbal directives
- Difficulty sequencing information
- Recognizing cues leading up to a transition (i.e. students packing up their materials, getting their coats on..)
- Restrictive patterns of behaviors that are hard to disrupt
- Current activity is more fun and engaging than the next activity

Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) may have greater difficulty in shifting attention from one task to another or in changes of routine. This may be due to a greater need for predictability or challenges in understanding what activity will be coming next.

What are Transition Strategies?

Transition strategies are techniques used to *support students during changes in or disruptions to activities, settings, or routines.*

Preparation Strategies

- Visual timer
- Visual Schedule
- Playing or singing a song that indicates that an activity is ending (i.e. clean up, put away toys, line up....)
- Establish a stopping point ("3 more jumps, then we are done")

Transition Pictures / Items

- At transition times give the student a picture or a series of pictures (door, hallway, new room..) of the location where they are going. Let the student carry the picture with them to that location.

Tasks

- Give the student a job or task to do while transitioning.
- Pull/pull a wagon or cart (add some weight for stability and some proprioceptive input!) Or try a toy stroller with a favorite stuffed animal friend.
- Collect recycling boxes when you pass offices or classrooms

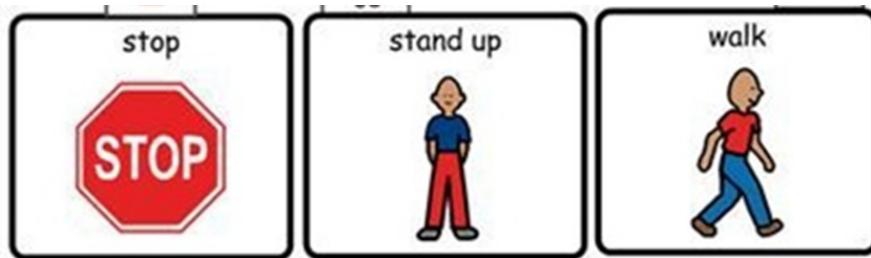
Transition Card – open door, hallway, destination



Transition Card – All Done symbol with timer being used



Transition Card – Refusing to walk



Transition/Comfort Item



Push/Pull Transition Supports

Add weight for resistance / proprioceptive input or to make deliveries!
Put felt on the bottom

Strategies That Support Smooth Transitions Between Activities

Before the Transition

- Plan your schedule to include a minimum number of transition times
- Consider what the children and adults will do during these times
- Provide verbal and nonverbal cues before transitions
- Teach children the expectations for the routine
- Minimize the number of transitions in which all children have to do the same thing at the same time



Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

Why Is It Important to Address Transitions Between Activities?

- Transitions take time
- Children often spend a lot of time waiting
- Transitions can be stressful and frustrating
- Skills such as cleaning up may reduce transition times and may lead to more time for children to be engaged in activities
- When children are taught what they “should be doing,” we are less likely to see problem behaviors
- Many preschool teachers consider children’s ability to independently make transitions a key skill



Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning



How to Make Smoother Transitions with Students with Autism

www.AutismClassroom.com

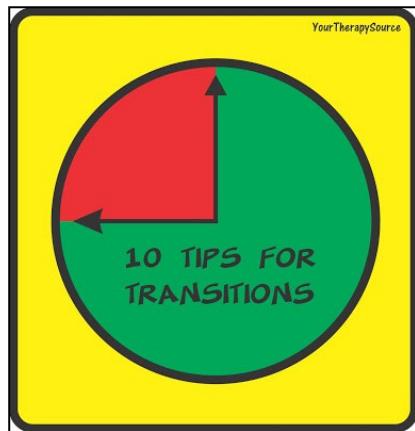
HELP ME
TRANSITION!

- Build in extra time for all transitions.
- Visual cues to show what is next.
- Have an item they really want at the place where they are going.
- Remove distracting items out of view.
- Give a verbal warning. (ex. "1 minute.")
- Use a visual warning. (ex. count down board)
- Use an auditory warning that an activity is almost done. (ex. timer)

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Book Source: How to Set Up a Classroom for Students with Autism (Second Edition)

Tips for Transitions



Do you have students who have difficulty transitioning from one activity to another? Maybe they have a hard time transitioning from the classroom to the therapy room.

Here are some tips to help make transitions easier:

1. Establish a consistent schedule or routine for the student to follow. Provide visual picture symbols if necessary for the student to follow.
2. Allow the student enough time to experience the activity before moving on to the next activity.
3. Make sure the student understands what the directions are or what is expected of him/her. Some students will need to be taught how to follow the routine. This takes practice and time.
4. Provide verbal and physical cues that a transition is approaching. There are plenty of visual timers that can be used to provide warnings for transitions.
5. Modify schedules to have the least amount of transitions possible. For example, if a student is already out of class to go to the nurse or another related service it may be a good time to schedule therapy to reduce the number of transitions in and out of the classroom. Another option would be to provide push in therapy services to avoid transitioning in and out of the room.

6. Sing songs or chants to signal transitions. Use the same songs each time so children can anticipate what is to happen next.
7. Provide feedback about transitions. If a student does a good job transitioning explain to him/her what they did correct. If changes need to be made offer suggestions of how to improve the transition the next time.
8. As the student's skills improve during transitions, encourage the student to transition independently.
9. Keep it simple with directions for the transition. One or two step motor commands should be effective and concise.
10. Provide positive reinforcement for other students who complete transitions successfully. Students will learn from each other and model other behaviors.