CREATING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS: TEACHING EXPECTATIONS AND TRANSITIONS

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Department of Human Services
- Division of Child Care
- Division of Behavioral Health
- Division of Child Welfare

The Colorado Health Foundation
The Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation
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Learning Objectives

- Participants will learn techniques for teaching children expectations
- Participants will receive strategies to support smooth transitions for children across environments
“Children are less likely to engage in problem behavior when they know what to do, how to do it, and what is expected.”

(Hemmeter, Ostrosky, and Fox, 2006)

rule
1. a principle or regulation governing conduct, action, procedure, arrangement, etc.: the rules of chess.
2. Rules: usually refers to standards for activities.

expectation
1. expecting: to wait in expectation.
2. the act or state of looking forward or anticipating.

(dictionary.com)
General Guidelines about Rules and Expectations

- Have a few simple expectations/rules (ideally 3-5)
- Post the expectations/rules visually
- Teach the expectations/rules systematically
- Remind child(ren) about the posted expectations/rules when a challenging behavior occurs
- Reinforce with specific positive feedback at high rates initially and at lower rates throughout the year

Rules and Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE STATEMENTS</th>
<th>NEGATIVE STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be kind</td>
<td>Don't hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be respectful</td>
<td>No swearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep others safe</td>
<td>No biting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep yourself safe</td>
<td>Don't climb on things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep things safe</td>
<td>No throwing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use listening ears</td>
<td>No yelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use walking feet</td>
<td>Don't run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands and feet to self</td>
<td>No kicking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Wide Expectations

Courtesy of Norwood / Prime Time Early Learning Center
Circle Time Rules

Raise a Quiet Hand

Be a Listening Friend

Ears are for Listening

Look with your eyes

Listen with your ears

Use nice hands and feet

Talk nicely

(Head Start Center for Inclusion)
House Rules

Teaching Rules and Expectations

- Have children help generate the rules
- Visual reminders/cues
- Name the rule and have a child demonstrate the rule
- Name the rule and have the children identify the visuals that might go on a poster
- Role play
- Puppets
- Modeling
- Reflection
- Scripted Stories

Visual Supports...

To indicate that materials, center or activity are not available.

Courtesy of Gunnison and Norwood District Preschools
I Use Walking Feet at School

I like to run. It is fun to go fast.
It’s okay to run when I am playing outside.
I can run when I am on the playground.
Sometimes I feel like running, but it is dangerous to run when I am inside.
Running inside could hurt me or other people.
When people are inside, they walk.
Walking inside is safe.
I will walk inside and only run when I am outside on the playground.
My teachers and parents like it when I remember to walk inside.

Scripted Stories

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/scriptedstories/tips.html

http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/social_stories
Video: Teaching Rules

Quote:

*Being actively engaged during routines, including transitions eliminates wasted time and provides an opportunity for learning.*

(Larson, Henthorne, and Plum, 1994)

Michelle – What is the problem?

Michelle is a 3-year old girl. She enjoys playing in the kitchen center and interacting with friends. When the teacher announces that it is time to clean up and sit on the carpet for group time, Michelle gets very upset. She throws toys and pushes other children. When the teacher comes near her, Michelle starts screaming and saying that she is not done playing.

Jim – What is the problem?

- Jim, a 4-year-old, is a new preschool student. He and the other preschoolers in his classroom are playing on the playground. When Miss Johns calls them to go inside, they all gather next to the entrance door. Jim stays in the sandbox. When Miss Johns approaches him and asks him to come with her he starts crying, screaming, and then drops to the ground.

Defining Transition

- Transition refers to a change
- Three types of transitions:
  1. Transitions between activities
  2. Transitions between multiple settings
  3. Transitions between programs
- We will focus on transition between activities

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
Activity: Mapping out Transitions

Complete Step 1:
Identify at least 5 transitions between activities in your daily schedule and complete the information in the first column.


Identify Transitions in your Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Time of the day</th>
<th>Transition between which activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:20-8:25</td>
<td>Arrival from buses and go to classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-8:35</td>
<td>Put away things in cubbies and come to circle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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
Strategies that support smooth transitions between activities

During the transition:
- Sing songs, play word or guessing games, recite rhymes, or do finger plays with children
- Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity and a good balance of active and quiet play
- Allow children adequate time to finish activities
- Plan something for those children who finish an activity quickly so they are not waiting without something to do

After the transition:
- Provide positive attention or feedback to children following smooth transitions
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions

Promote independence during transitions
- Allow children to move individually from one area to another area when they complete an activity
- Teach children to help one another
- Help children self-monitor during transitions

Activity: Mapping out Transitions

Complete Step 2:
For each transition you identify in Step 1, add strategies you could use before, during, and after the transition.

Activity: Complete Transition Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Strategies to use before the transition</th>
<th>Strategies to use during the transition</th>
<th>Strategies to use after the transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:20-8:25</td>
<td>Adult is present to greet and wait for students; prompt children to line up with a buddy</td>
<td>Teacher guides discussion about things the children saw as they rode the bus to school</td>
<td>Teacher gives the children a “high 5” as they enter the classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individualize Transition Strategies

Provide support to children during transitions.
References

- Head Start Center for Inclusion: Visuals & Supports
  http://depts.washington.edu/hscenrer/classroom-visuals
- TACSEI: Resources – Tools
  http://www.challengingbehavior.org/do/resources.htm

Contact Us

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