

Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities



Project funded by the Child Care and Head Start Bureaus in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



What Works Brief Training Kit #4



Center on the Social and Emotional
Foundations for Early Learning
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/

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The **What Works Brief Training Kits** were developed to help in-service and pre-service providers conduct staff development activities. Each Kit is based on one What Work Brief and contains the following items: presenter's PowerPoint note pages, participant handouts, activity ideas, pre-training survey, demographic form, training evaluation, and training certificate.

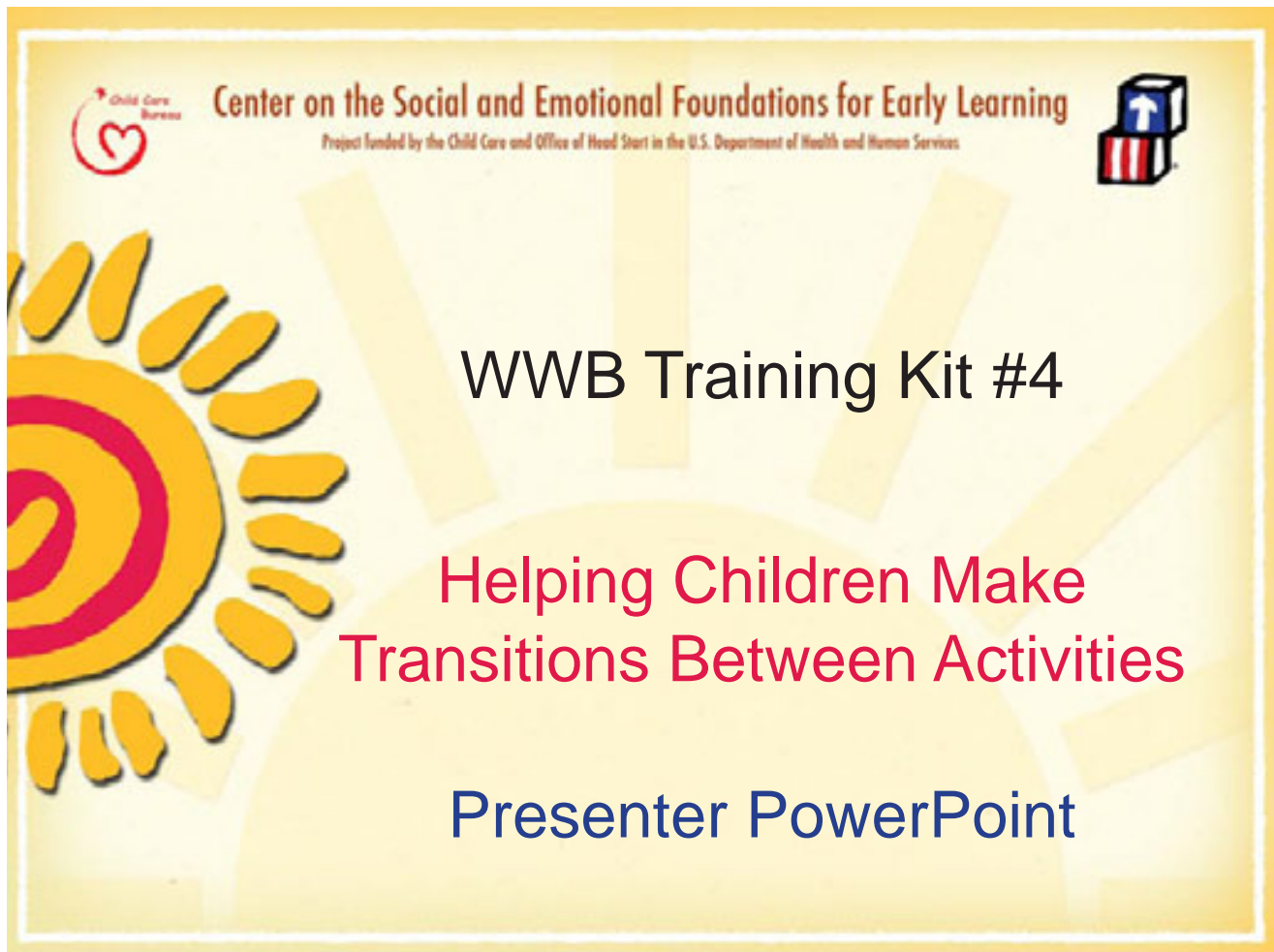
The What Works Brief Training Kits are grounded in the Pyramid model depicted below which provides a framework for describing the four interrelated levels of practice that address the social and emotional development of all children. The Pyramid is designed to guide practitioners in understanding the importance of children's social emotional competence in terms of school readiness and the prevention of challenging behavior. This What Works Brief Training Kit relates to the "High Quality Environments" level of the Pyramid.



We welcome your feedback as you provide professional development activities with these materials.

Special thanks to the Meginnis Endowment at UIUC for funding to help support this effort and to the following individuals who developed the What Works Brief Training Kits materials: Micki Ostrosky, Hedda Meadan, Greg Cheatham, Monique Mills, Sallee Beneke, Nancy Gaumer, Amy Hayden, Elenor Rentschler, and Angel Fettig.

Presenter Notes



Speaker Notes:

- Presenter should be familiar with the content in *What Works Brief #4* and Module 1 Section VII on Schedules, Routines and Transitions (available at csefel.uiuc.edu).
- Welcome participants.
- Take care of any logistics (e.g, length of time for session, break, handouts, etc.).
- Consider using the *What Works Brief # 4* handout as a supplemental resource.
- Pass out pre-training survey for all participants to complete and turn in, if desired.
- As you present the workshop:
 - Remind participants to take the culture and background of children into consideration and to work hand-in-hand with parents when they select target behaviors, since some behaviors may be part of the child's culture.

Activity 1

Pair-Think-Share

- **Pair** with a partner
- **Read** a scenario
- **Think** about why
- **Share** your thoughts



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Speaker Notes:

- Assign partners.
- Have half the group read one scenario and half read the other scenario.
- Pairs should think of reasons why the child in the vignette might be having difficulties.
- Share thoughts with the larger group by having one person read aloud a vignette then all who worked on that vignette share their ideas.
- Repeat, focusing on the other vignette.

Activity 1

What Is the Problem?

Michelle

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 finished playing.



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Speaker Notes:

Possible reasons for Michelle's behavior that the group might come up with:

- The time is too short and Michelle barely gets into her play when it is time to clean up
- She needs more warnings to anticipate cleanup time
- She does not like group time (it might be too long, too difficult, etc.)
- She does not understand what it means to "clean up"—how and where to put the toys away

Activity 1

What Is the Problem?

Jim

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 and screaming, then drops to the ground.



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Speaker Notes:

Possible reasons for Jim's behavior that the group might come up with:

- Jim is new and does not know the schedule
- The time is too short and Jim barely gets into playing in the sandbox when it is time to clean up
- Jim needs more warnings to anticipate cleanup time
- Jim does not like the activity that follows outdoor recess time
- Jim does not know why Miss Johns wants him to come with her and assumes he has done something "wrong"

Transition

- Transition refers to a change
- Types of transitions:
 - Transitions between activities
 - Transitions between multiple settings
 - Transitions between programs
- We will focus on transition between activities.



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Speaker Notes:

- Define *transition*.
Transition refers to a change (e.g., who provides services, what activities are available).
- There are 3 main types of transitions:
 - Transitions between activities within a given setting (e.g., snack to playground; outdoor recess to large group).
 - Transitions between multiple settings on the same day (e.g., preschool to after-school child-care program; Head Start program to child care).
 - Transitions between programs (e.g., birth-three programs to preschool, preschool to elementary school).
- 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



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Speaker Notes:

- Transitions take a great deal of time
- During transition time, children often spend much time waiting (e.g., wait until everyone has finished snack, wait for buses)
- Some children (and adults) have stressful and frustrating experiences during transitions between activities (e.g., children arguing over who took out what toys and should put them away; children not knowing where to put certain toys when they are done with them)
- Skills such as cleaning up toys and lining up may reduce transition times and may lead to more time for children to become engaged in learning activities
- As children become independent and are taught what they “should be doing,” we are less likely to see problem behaviors.
- Many preschool teachers and other caregivers consider children’s ability to independently make transitions between activities one of the essential skills needed in group contexts such as kindergarten and preschool.

Activity 2

- Identify the transitions between activities in your classroom schedule.
- Complete the information in the table (see handout).



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Speaker Notes:

- Refer participants to the handout.
- Have each person write down his/her classroom or program's daily schedule, noting each transition time between activities.

Identify Transitions times in your classroom

Transition • Time of day • Transition between which activities			
8:20-8:25 Arrival from buses and go to classroom			
8:25-8:30 Put away things in cubbies and come to circle			



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Speaker Notes:

- We will complete this handout during the next 30 minutes. For now, complete Column 1 by listing the time of day and transitions between activities.
- Discussion question: Do you have too many transitions during the day? Are there some you can adapt or eliminate? How?

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



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Speaker Notes:

There are numerous strategies that support smooth transitions between activities.

Examples of strategies you can use before the transition:

- Plan your daily schedule to include the minimal number of transition times possible.
- Consider what the children and adults will do during these times (e.g., which adult is responsible for greeting the children and who will begin looking at books on the carpet with children?).
- Provide verbal and nonverbal cues before transitions (e.g., “5 minutes ’til snack,” “It’s almost time for cleanup,” show pictures of the next activity, ringing a bell). Teach children expectations such as which shelves hold which blocks.
- Minimize the number of transitions during which all children have to do the same thing at the same time (e.g., Do all children have to go to the restroom at the same time? Can some children come over to the rug and get ready for large group while others are finishing an activity?)

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



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Speaker Notes:

Examples of strategies to use during the transition:

- Sing songs, play word or guessing games, recite rhymes, or do finger plays with children so that the time passes more quickly when they have to wait for long periods of time for new activities to begin
- Plan a gradual increase or decrease in the level of activity (e.g., outdoor play followed by snack) and a good balance of active and quiet play (e.g., center time followed by story time)
- Allow children adequate time to finish projects or activities so they do not become frustrated by activities ending too soon
- Plan something for those children who finish an activity quickly so they are not waiting without something to do (e.g., if some children finish cleaning up and getting to large group quickly, might they look at books while waiting for other children to finish cleaning up?)

Strategies That Support Smooth Transitions Between Activities

After the Transition

- Provide positive attention or feedback to children following smooth transitions
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions



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Speaker Notes:

Examples of strategies to use after the transition:

- Provide positive attention or feedback to children during AND following smooth transitions (e.g., when children pick up toys without much prompting, tell them this shows how well they take care of their “things” and how much you appreciate their working independently).
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions (e.g., “Nicholas and Jorge did a great job cleaning up the block area and moving to the carpet.”).

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.



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Speaker Notes:

Promote independence during transitions:

- Allow children to move individually from one area to another area when they complete an activity (e.g., as children finish snack, they are encouraged to go to the carpet and choose a book; as children finish putting away their coats and backpacks, they are encouraged to get a puzzle).
- Teach children to help others (e.g., have children move as partners from one activity to another or ask one child to help another child gather his/her backpack).
- Help children self-monitor during transitions (e.g., children can be asked to think about how quietly or quickly they moved from one activity to another).

Activity 3

Transition • Time of day • Transition between which activities	Strategies to use before the transition	Strategies to use during the transition	Strategies to use after the transition
8:20-8:25 Arrival from buses and go to classroom	Adult is present to greet and wait for students; prompt children to line up with a buddy	Teacher guides discussion about things the children saw as they rode the bus to school	Teacher gives the children a “high 5” as they enter the classroom



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Speaker Notes:

- Have participants take out their handout and fill in ideas (in Columns 2, 3, and 4) to consider within their schedule. The slide has one example on it—read this example aloud to the group.
- If necessary, have one participant share a transition time (and what it is like in his/her site and what problems he/she encounters during this transition time). Other participants can brainstorm strategies to use before/during/after as a way to get the group started.

Individualize Transition Strategies

Provide support to children during transitions.



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Speaker Notes:

- Provide support to children during transitions:
 - photos to help anticipate what activity is next
 - directions given in a child's home language or sign language
 - an individual warning to a child that soon it will be time to clean up and begin a new activity
- Support may need to be individualized (i.e., one child may need an adult to provide a 5-minute, 3-minute, and 1-minute warning before cleanup while the rest of the class might only need a 3-minute warning)
- See if there are any concerns or general questions about the topic of transitions between activities.
- Thank the participants for participating and have them complete the evaluation form, if appropriate.
- Distribute the certificate of attendance if appropriate.

Pre-training Survey

WWBTK #4: Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities

☀ **Is it important to address transitions between activities in early childhood settings? Why or why not?**

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☀ **What are two strategies you use to support transitions between activities in your classroom?**

☀ **What strategies do you use to promote independence during transitions?**

☀ **What are the three most pressing issues you face as an early childhood professional?**

1.

2.

3.

Pre-training Survey

WWBTK #4: Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities

Demographic Information

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Describe yourself (check the boxes that best describe you):

Your gender: Female Male

Your age: under 30 31 to 40 41 to 50
 51-60 61 and above

Your ethnicity: European American Asian-Pacific Hispanic
 African-American American Indian Other (specify) _____

Check your current teaching certificates:

- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education
- Special Education
- Other (Specify) _____

Check the one that best describes your education:

- High school or GED
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Other (Specify) _____

Your teaching experience:

How many year(s) have you taught preschoolers? _____

How many year(s) have you taught preschoolers with IEPs? _____

Thank you for completing this survey.

Participant Notes



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WWB Training Kit #4

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Participant PowerPoint

Notes

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Strategies That Support Smooth Transitions Between Activities

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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
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Strategies That Support Smooth Transitions Between Activities

After the Transition

- Provide positive attention or feedback to children following smooth transitions
- Give very specific positive feedback after transitions



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Notes

Promote Independence During Transitions

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



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Individualize Transition Strategies

Provide support or different types of support to children during transitions.



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Notes

Activity 1

Pair-Think-Share

WWBTK #4: Helping Children Make Transitions Between Activities

Directions: Read the following case studies, think about the reasons the children might have difficulties, and share your thoughts with the person next to you.

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Case Study 1: Michelle

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 finished playing.

Case Study 2: Jim

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 and screaming, then drops to the ground.

CSEFEL Training Workshop Evaluation

WWBTK #4: Helping Children Make Transitions Between Activities

Date: _____ Location: _____

Topic: _____

Speaker(s): _____

Your position: _____

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☀ Circle the number that best expresses your reaction to each of the following items:

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. This topic is important to me. | (Extremely Important) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not Important at All) |
| 2. The amount of information covered was | (Just Right) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Inadequate) |
| 3. The information covered was clear. | (Very Clear) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Vague) |
| 4. The activities conducted were beneficial. | (Very) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not at All) |
| 5. The handouts provided were useful. | (Very) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not at All) |
| 6. Overall, this presentation was | (Very Useful) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not Useful) |

☀ Things I liked about this presentation:

☀ Things I would change about this presentation:

☀ Additional information I would like on this topic:

☀ New things I am going to try as a result of this workshop:

☀ Additional comments:

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Certificate of Training

Helping Children Make Transitions between Activities

This is to certify that

successfully completed the above training

Trainer

Trainer



Center on the Social and Emotional
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Participant

Date and Location

Additional training resources are available at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>