



# TRANSITIONS

## MANAGING CHANGE

### Transitions

Transitions include changing activities, locations, and the people you are with. Each of these transitions must be managed if it is to be successful. Some youth struggle with “change” and understanding transitions will give you strategies for working with these youth.



### Transitions Overview

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## Transitions

### Key Points

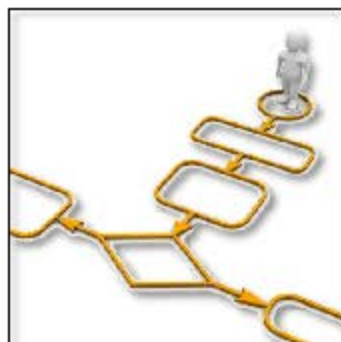
When you complete this e-Book you will understand how to support youth successfully transition from one activity to another or one location to another in your afterschool program.

### Terms/Glossary

Look for these terms as you read:

**Transition:** changing from one activity to another, one location to another

**Slow Adapters:** refers to youth who take a long time to get started with an activity and an equally long time to close down an activity; often do not like change



### Prior Knowledge

How well do you transition from one activity to another? Do you want to linger until the last possible second before going out the door to work? Are you the person who leaves way too early so you can be ready when you get to your next location be that work, school, or lunch with a friend? These are your transition habits. How do you prepare for each transition you make throughout every day?

### Brain Power

There is a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson which states, "Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energizing spirit." Transition synonyms evolution, conversion, and shift speak to the energizing spirit that is inherent in the word transition. Think about the important transitions that you have made in your life—child-adult, single-married, couple-parent and more. You practice these by practicing the many transitions you make each day.

### Introduction

We are all fascinated with learning about how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly or a tadpole becomes a frog. Because these two transitions are so dramatic, we label it metamorphosis and have studied it endlessly. Gradual transitions happen to people as they change from infant to toddler, to child, youth, adult and finally senior citizen. Less dramatic transitions occur every day as a child moves through his or her day at home, school and afterschool. Learning how to transition successfully in the day to day activities can help young people make more challenging transitions as they become an adult with greater understanding and ease. This e-Book focuses on strategies to support the transitions that occur during the afterschool program.



### **Debrief**

Reflect on the last transition you made, either minor or major. How does what you've read in this e-Book help you in this reflection. What has confirmed things you already knew?





## Knowledge and Information

Transitions are one of the most public faces of afterschool programming. Once you are “on the move”, whether this is changing activities or location, you are much more likely to have youth who are not fully engaged and cooperating. Learning to manage transitions will help you be successful in your work. In after-school programs you have many transitions to manage. You must manage the transition from the school day to your program, manage the transition to snack, roll, and other opening activities, manage the move to a classroom for homework support, manage the transition to physical activity outdoors, to youth choice during enrichment, and finally to your closing when you transition youth back to the parent or caregiver. These are just the transitions from one activity and/or location to another, but you will also have transitions within your lessons and activities. You transition from the lesson opening to small group or partner work, bring students back together at the end of the lesson for debriefing, and then setting up the next activity.

Here are the top seven (7) tips for Managing Transitions successfully:

### Tip #1

Make space in your schedule for transitions. Too often we allocate a certain amount of time for an activity, but we forget that we will need to transition from one activity to another. To stay on schedule we rush the transition, and this can only lead to stragglers and chaos. So be sure that you make space for the transition—in the beginning probably 10 minutes, once you and your group become accomplished, you will probably only need 5 minutes.



### Tip #2

Talk about what a transition is and what it would take to do it well. Be careful to ask students what it would take to move from one activity to another or one location to another effectively. Ask open-ended questions that begin with the words “what” or “how”. Ask, “What do you think is important about transitioning from one activity (or location) to another?” “What do you think each person needs to do to makes transitions successful?” “What do you think a good transition will look like, sound like, feel like?” Once you have determined what a successful transition will look like, ask youth to identify the steps to follow and create a step-by-step procedure.

### Tip #3

Give a 5 minute warning before the transition is to begin. Remember, even professional football players appreciate being given a 2 minute warning. This 5 minute warning will also be helpful for youth who are “slow adapters”. These are the youth who take time to get started and an equal amount of time to shut down. They don’t like it when they have to stop and they didn’t know that the end point was coming. They

simply “drag their feet” and everyone waits for them to get ready. All this waiting can lead to disengaged students and that will increase the demands on the Program Leader for classroom management. Another thing you can do to manage the transition, you can post an agenda at the beginning of the day, include time frames that include time for transition.

#### Tip #4



Understand the bookends of a transition: closing one activity and opening the next activity. When you have finished an activity with a debrief, you are ready to take the next step which is to transition to the next activity. Remember to set the stage and build anticipation about the next activity just before you begin the transition. Help youth to think through what they will need to do to be ready for what’s coming. Develop hand signals to support the transition (quiet, wait, stop, I understand, thank you). Be sure to remind youth of all you

have talked about that will make a strong transition. Once you’ve laid the groundwork for the next activity, it’s time to open it up. Use an attention getter to launch the next activity. Begin right away and share with the students what they will learn today.

#### Tip #5

When your focus is on transitions, be sure to stop and discuss how well you’ve managed this move from one activity to another. After you have determined as a group what a good transition will look like, when you have completed a transition, rate yourself. You might want to ask students to show fingers to represent the score they are giving the transition from 1 (not good at all) to 10 (WOW! exemplary). Talk about what went well and what needs improvement. Make plans for the next transition. Offer generous praises for appropriate behavior during the transition.



#### Tip #6

Practice, practice, practice. In his book *Outliers*, Malcom Gladwell says that be really good at something you need to practice at least 10,000 hours. You probably don’t need to do that many, but practicing is what will make the transition work well. Debrief the transition to ensure everyone is focused on success. Like was mentioned in Tip #5, rate transition effectiveness and give clear feedback from students on transitions. Utilize activities during the transition to keep students focused. These could include warm up on the way to physical activity or multiplication tables on your way to homework.

## Tip #7

The ultimate key to successful transitions is student buy-in and ownership. Practicing all of the tips will help to build student ownership. It is important youth understand that the onus of successful transitions is on them.



## **Bullet Points**

- Make space in your schedule for transitions.
- Talk about transitions—what they are and how to make them successful
- Give a 5 minute warning before a transition begins
- Understand the bookends of a transition—closing one activity and opening another
- Debrief a transition once it is complete
- Practice, practice, practice
- Create buy-in to and ownership of successful transitions with the youth

## **C4K Minute—Making It Real**

In your mind visualize the transition from Opening to your first rotation. Think through each of the steps that you will need to take with youth to make this transition successful. If something doesn't seem quite right in this visualization, cut, rewind, and replay, making the changes that are necessary to be successful.

## **Debrief**

What 2-3 pieces of information in this 3-Book were most resonate to you? How will you apply this information the next time you meet with youth?



## Review

### Tricks of the Trade

Include time for transitions in your schedule. In the beginning give it more time than you think it will take and identify ways to quickly celebrate your success in completing with time to spare.

### Gem of the Day

Even a professional football game changes “style” when the players receive the two-minute warning. It reminds them that time is important and also “running out”. If a two minute warning can change football it can certainly change your afterschool program.



### Important Take-A ways

The option isn’t about whether or not to transition but how to make that transition with ease, grace and efficiency.

### Troubleshooting

My schedule is so jam packed how can I add one more thing? How can I possibly add time for transitions?

Actually, when you don’t schedule time for a transition it probably takes you longer to move from one activity to another than if you would have been intentional about the time. See a transition as the closing of one activity and the opening of another, even if that “next activity” is also in a different location.

### Best Practices

- ✓ Set up a protocol for transitions (work through the protocol with your students)
- ✓ Assess the effectiveness of each transition, making alterations when necessary
- ✓ Celebrate a successful transition—this is how you will solidify a “habit”

### FAQ's

What do I do when a transition just doesn’t work?

The chances of transitions “working” every time are slim to none. When they don’t work, discuss the transition with the youth. Identify where the transition got bogged down. Brainstorm solutions and then put one of them into practice and repeat the process. When you have worked through each step of a transition, you will be more likely to be successful.

## Universal

Every day you transition from one location and activity to another. Understanding what causes you to bog down or be effective will help you build the habit of effective transitions.

## Afterschool

Take the time to count the number of transitions that you make each day in your program. You may be surprised by the number of them that there are. Think about how to tighten the time you spend on each one, freeing more time for being immersed in learning.

## Positional

Remember that you are a role model for the youth you work with. If you do not monitor your own transitions well (showing up “out of breath”, not having materials and supplies organized, having youth wait while you pull it together) speaks volumes. Model the habits you want youth to emulate.



## Review

### Key Learning

Since you have reviewed the material, ask yourself how you can translate the information into a learning for you, and then how will you practice that learning by implementing it or executing on a specific action. Think in terms of your personal and professional life. For example:

**Personal:** I have learned that I need to think about transitions in my daily life. I usually wait to the last minute and then am often late and my friends and family end up waiting for me.

**Professional:** It is important to help youth think about transitions and to intentionally plan them so they can be “orchestrated” in a timely manner.

### Journal Entry

I did this well and celebrated by \_\_\_\_\_.

I did not do so well at \_\_\_\_\_, and I will strengthen my performance in the future by doing \_\_\_\_\_.

## Debrief

What have you learned about yourself and how you might help youth with successful transitions? How will you apply this learning as you move forward?



## Walk Through the Day

### The Openings

**Pre-Pre-Opening:** On your way to work consider each of the transitions that you are making, from the most minor (maybe a lane change), to one that is more major (thinking through your mind-set so you are ready for program). Be intentional not only about the transition but how you are going through the process.

**Practical Application:** Be sure you have enough time in your schedule to transition successfully between your life before work and your life once you've arrived. By the time you get to work be in the moment and ready for work.

**Pre-Opening:** As you have moved from the parking lot to the school or center, continue to focus on becoming more and more in the moment so you can pay attention to the youth as well as the people who work during the school day and other afterschool staff.

**Practical Application:** Greet all of the people you meet on your way to the opening when you will greet youth. Practice paying attention to each of them by looking at them and pausing when you say "hello". If you build in time for this transition you will discover you are ready to go when the youth arrive.

**Opening:** Opening is a defined period of time. You are transitioning youth from the school day into the culture of your afterschool program. This 15-20 minutes will set the tone for the day. Think through all of the transitions that occur in this short period of time. Your number one goal is to be sure that each youth knows you are glad that they are in program and then secondly to get them ready for an action packed day.



**Practical Application:** Quickly take roll to be sure that all of your youth are present and accounted for. If not, follow the protocol for checking to see where missing students are. Managing this aspect of the transition from school day to afterschool successfully will assure all of the youth that they are in a safe place.

**Rotations:** Just the category of rotations alerts you to the number of transitions that you will be making during the core of your afterschool program. Take the time to make each transition successful. In the beginning of the program year you might not get as much done, but by the time you've worked through the "how" of transitions, you will have more time on task.

**Practical Application:** Awareness is the first step in making change. Be sure that your youth understand how many transitions they participate in each program day. Also be sure that they understand the role they play in successful and unsuccessful transitions.

**Closing:** During the closing you are supporting youth as they “close” down the activities of your program and transition to going home with a parent or caregiver.” Setting youth up for a successful transition is part of your job.

## Connections to Online Instruction

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|----------------|----------------------|
| ➤ PL Mini #8   | Transitions          |
| ➤ PL Module #3 | Transitions          |
| ➤ Lesson #13   | Successful Rotations |

