

Transitions

“Transition time”, when students are changing from one activity to another (or one place to another), can become times of chaos and conflict, if the leader has not considered a plan or routine for smooth changes. A thoughtless transition can result in students getting “lost in the shuffle”, and messes left behind for staff. It can waste valuable time, leaving staff and students frustrated and stressed. Although we try to lessen the “school structure” during after school time, some class management techniques can result in a more efficient and rewarding use of staff and students’ time.

Here are a few suggestions for helping students to move in an orderly and efficient fashion.

- ***Establish routines so students know what to expect and when.*** Praise students who remember to clean up snack before leaving the area, who zip homework supplies back in their bags, who put games away after using them, who hang up coats as soon as they walk in the door, etc.
- ***Gather students before changing locations to*** a) Explain what they will be doing. b) Make sure staff know where students are, ensuring safety and supervision. c) Travel as a group, so students do not get separated from the leader. d) Consider physical needs, such as bathroom time, drinks of water, coats and gloves, etc.
- ***Before beginning an activity or changing locations, tell students what behavior is expected.*** For example, “After we finish painting, you will wash your brushes and put them on the paper towel. You will put your picture on this table to dry.” “When we finish playing, we will line up at the fence and go inside together. Bring your racquet back in with you.”
- ***Praise students who help with transitions,*** such as getting quiet to hear instructions, helping to gather supplies, being patient, setting a good example, using an “inside voice”, helping with clean-up, etc.

If you have other ideas that have helped you with transitions, please let me know so we can share them with each other!