

Speech and Language Therapy

Using Songs for Transitions

Using songs during transition times - such as moving from one activity to another, cleaning up, or getting ready to leave or finish a favoured activity is important for several reasons, especially in environments like classrooms, early childhood settings, or group gatherings.



Transition songs are a simple but powerful tool for smoother, more structured, and more joyful daily routines - particularly in group settings involving young learners.



For some children, using songs at key transitions point throughout the day or when a favoured activity is finishing can help to tune them in and ease frustration when something they enjoy doing. You can also use objects of reference and symbols alongside your chosen transitions songs.



Why are transition songs beneficial?

1. Creates a Predictable Routine

Songs provide a clear auditory cue that something is about to change. This predictability helps children (and even adults) feel more secure and understand what's expected.

2. Eases Anxiety and Resistance

Transitions can be stressful or confusing. A familiar, upbeat song can reduce anxiety and resistance by making the moment feel fun and engaging rather than abrupt or chaotic.

3. Promotes attention and provide a signal

Music naturally grabs attention whilst also providing a signal for children. A transition song can redirect focus and motivate cooperation, particularly in young children, without the need for repeated verbal instructions.

4. Supports Language and Cognitive Skills

Transition songs often include simple instructions, rhymes, or routines that reinforce listening skills, vocabulary, sequencing, and memory.

5. Encourages Independence

Repetitive lyrics and melodies allow children to anticipate the next steps and eventually begin transitioning on their own without needing constant guidance.

6. Manages Time Effectively

A song provides a built-in timer. For example, a cleanup song that lasts two minutes gives a clear timeframe for children to complete the task.

7. Creates Positive Associations

Songs add a playful, enjoyable element to everyday tasks, turning mundane or difficult moments into something children look forward to.

Who might benefit from transitions songs?

- Children with Special education needs i.e. Autism, down syndrome etc.
- Children who are Gestalt language processors
- Children who may have Pathological demand avoidance
- Children within Early years

How to use songs for transition?

- School and parents select 3 songs that can be used to support the child's understanding of routines e.g., 'It's tidy up time' 'it's toilet time' 'it's bedtime'
- School can search songs on YouTube or make up lyrics using nurse rhyme rhythm or a favoured song.
- School and parents should use the same songs to ensure consistency.
- Sing the song to the child during the transition activity.
- If possible, use a different rhythm for each activity song to avoid confusion.
- Adult can use actions while singing to further support the child's understanding

Examples of when transition songs can be used:

- Finishing
- Tidy up
- Let's go walking... for transition outside of the classroom.
- Dinner time
- Toilet song
- Countdown songs

Top Tips:

- ✓ Be consistent in using the same song lyric and rhythm
- ✓ Implement the strategy into the child's daily routine.
- ✓ Use the strategy during each transition- can be used alongside visual transitions strategies such as objects of reference, now/next and visual timetables.
- ✓ Make it FUN!! You could do this by incorporating children favourites songs, a dance or maybe even an instrument to gain the child's attention even more.

Resources:

- [The 10 Best Preschool Transition Songs - Early Childhood Education Degrees](#)
- [Miss Nina's Transition Songs - YouTube](#)
- More about Transition songs: [Transition Songs](#)
- [Five Musical Transitions For Early Childhood — Music for Kiddos](#)
- Idea of transition songs: [Transition-Songs.pdf](#)
- Examples of transitions songs: [Singing through transitions](#)
- Twinkl: [Preschool Transition Song for Snack Time \(teacher made\)](#)

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

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If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

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