

Break & Transition Toolkit

Managing challenging transition times

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Why Transitions Are Hard

Transitions require students to:

- Stop a current activity (may be preferred)
- Shift attention and mental set
- Manage uncertainty about what's next
- Navigate physical movement
- Begin a new activity (may be non-preferred)

For students with behavior challenges, any of these can trigger difficulties.

Proactive Transition Strategies

Before the Transition

- Give advance warning (5 min, 2 min, 1 min)
- Use visual and/or auditory signals
- Preview what's coming next
- Finish current activity at natural stopping point
- Prepare materials for next activity

During the Transition

- Use consistent routines and procedures
- Provide visual supports (schedule, task list)
- Minimize wait time
- Give specific directions (not "get ready")
- Reinforce smooth transitions immediately

Break Request System

Teaching students to request breaks appropriately:

1. Identify the replacement behavior (break card, verbal request)
2. Teach the procedure when calm
3. Honor all appropriate requests initially
4. Set clear parameters (where, how long, what activities)
5. Fade support as skills develop

Break Area Checklist

- Designated, consistent location
- Low-stimulation environment
- Calming tools available (fidgets, headphones)
- Visual timer for break duration
- Clear re-entry procedure

Not punitive - this is a regulation space

Transition Data Tracking

Transition	Time	Success?	Challenges	Supports Used
Arrival		&		
To specials		&		
From recess		&		
To lunch		&		
End of day		&		

Transition Observations

Track Transition Success

Classroom Pulse includes transition tracking to identify patterns and measure intervention effectiveness.

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