



Environmental Support for Positive Behavior Management

Schedules and Transitions

**Kansas Inservice Training System (1998)
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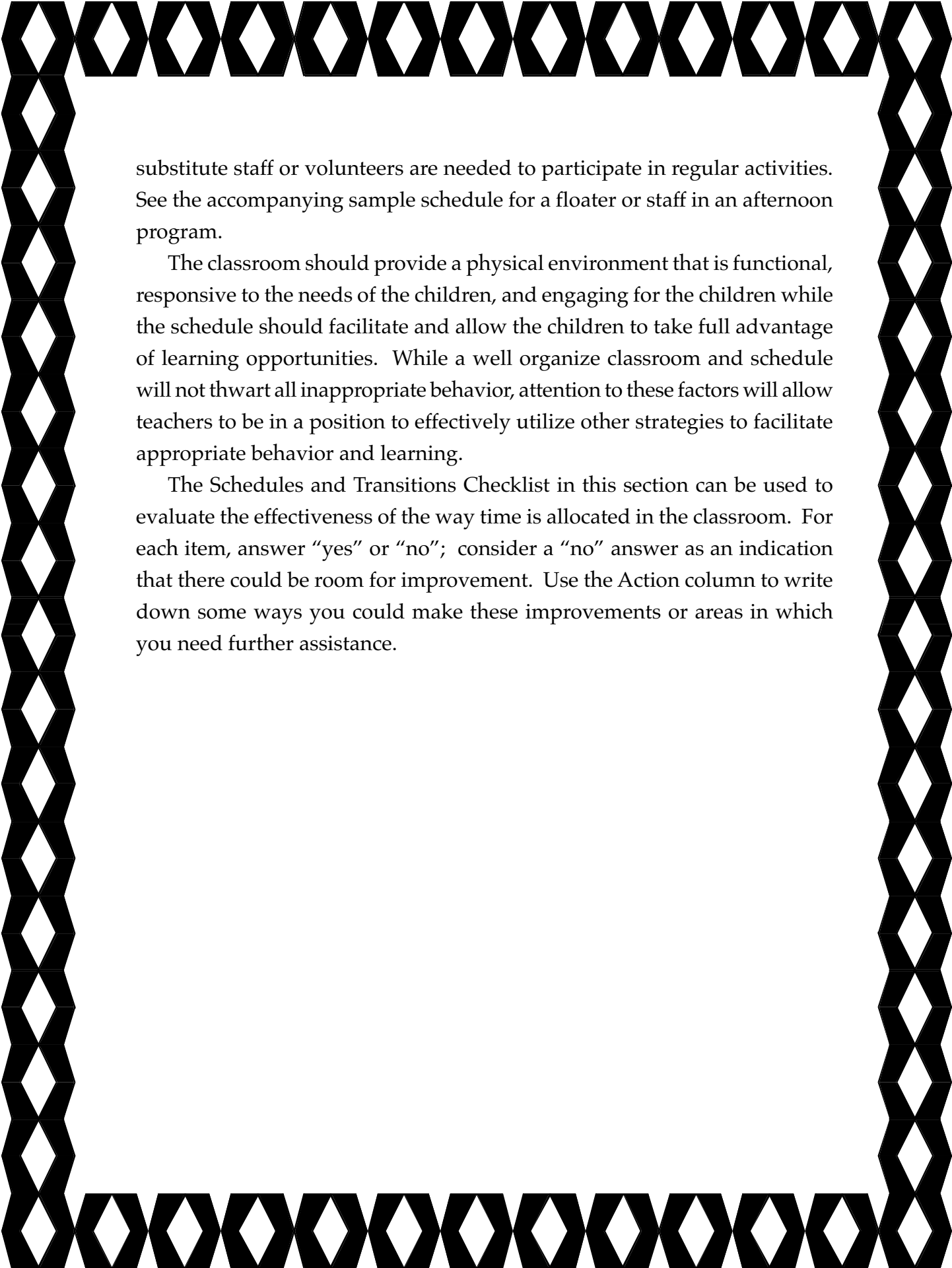


Schedules and Transitions

Effective classroom organization must take into account not only the physical environment but the programmatic structure of the classroom which includes the schedule of activities, grouping of children and how the staff manage activities within that schedule. When one considers the schedule for the day it is extremely important that thought be given to the sequence of activities. It is important for children to have a consistent routine to follow and to prepare them for each upcoming event. Additionally, the sequence should reflect a continuity among activities, and preparation for the transition between them. For example, the placement of a quieting transition activity between an active outdoor play time and an indoor circle time in which children are expected to sit, listen and be involved in a small group activity represents good sequence planning.

Transition planning should also include strategies to make the transitions smooth and trouble-free. These include using short transition times, giving a pre-signal or warning to transition (e.g., “five more minutes”, or a bell ringing), and review the rules for transition often. Also try to assign staff roles during transitions, pair children if necessary or appropriate, and reinforce model behaviors or good transition behavior.

As the schedule for the day is developed it will be important to consider the type of staffing patterns that are needed or desired for specific activities and what strategies staff are most comfortable with and which emphasize staff strengths. For example will staff work with a set group of children and move from activity to activity with that group or will staff be responsible for a specific area of the classroom. In this case children would move from area to area as they complete an activity and a staff member would be available to welcome them to and engage them in the activity. Each of these staffing patterns has strengths and weaknesses, but thoughtful consideration must be given to this issue to provide for effective management of the classroom schedule. In some cases, it is helpful to have a schedule for staff, so that each person knows what activity he/she is responsible for and when or where to be at any given time. This is also helpful when regular staff are absent and



substitute staff or volunteers are needed to participate in regular activities. See the accompanying sample schedule for a floater or staff in an afternoon program.

The classroom should provide a physical environment that is functional, responsive to the needs of the children, and engaging for the children while the schedule should facilitate and allow the children to take full advantage of learning opportunities. While a well organize classroom and schedule will not thwart all inappropriate behavior, attention to these factors will allow teachers to be in a position to effectively utilize other strategies to facilitate appropriate behavior and learning.

The Schedules and Transitions Checklist in this section can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the way time is allocated in the classroom. For each item, answer “yes” or “no”; consider a “no” answer as an indication that there could be room for improvement. Use the Action column to write down some ways you could make these improvements or areas in which you need further assistance.

DAILY SCHEDULE

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

FLOATER—GENERAL DUTIES:

- ☺ Responsible for general tone and balance of classroom.
- ☺ Greet and dismiss children.
- ☺ Assist where needed.
- ☺ Responsible for juice time.
- ☺ Help gather children for group time.
- ☺ Handle set-up and clean-up of paints and easels each day.
- ☺ Clean and tidy preparation area.
- ☺ File paintings and messages.
- ☺ Hang monthly painting show of children's work.

- 12:15
- ✍ File name tags in cubbies.
 - ✍ Set up paints.
 - ✍ Select toys for game time and set aside.
 - ✍ Prepare snacks, cover and set aside.
 - ✍ Assist with art/science or other activities which are to be presented.
 - ✍ Check lockers, file art projects, parent messages, etc.

- 12:45 - 1:30
- ☞ Greet children and parents.
 - ☞ Check health needs.
 - ☞ Respond to parent concerns and inquires.
 - ☞ Call attention to information regarding school events and/or research.
 - ☞ Take roll and assist where needed.
 - ☞ Touch base with all children and staff.

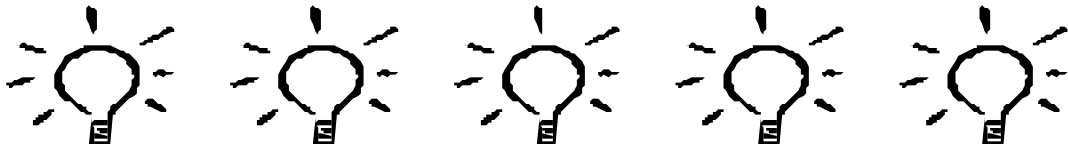
- 1:30 - 2:15
- ✓ Serve snacks or delegate other staff to do so.
 - ✓ Close juice.
 - ✓ Wipe all surfaces and wash utensils in hot soapy water.

- 2:50 - 3:00
- ☞ Staff and children restore school and prepare for transition to group time.
 - ☞ Shoes on, wet clothing filed or located.

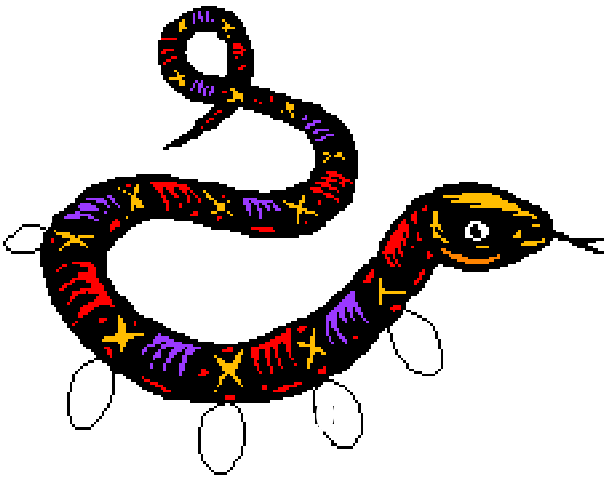
- 3:15 - 3:35
- ⚙ Set up sufficient play (games) options.
 - ⚙ Provide opportunities for a range of quiet, focused individual and group experiences in reasoning, problem solving, math, and language arts, as well as fine motor skills development through drawing and scribbling, manipulatives, etc.

- 3:35 - 3:45
- ✳ Assist at game time and supervise children's departure.
 - ✳ Remind parents to take home children's projects or messages from school.

Adapted from: Wayne County Early Childhood Center, Monticello, Kentucky.



BRIGHT IDEAS



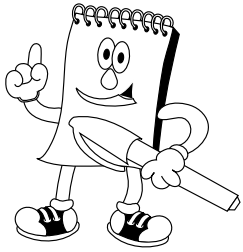
Sammy the Sleeping Snake

Sammy is used to make a quiet transition from one location to another, usually some distance apart (different rooms). The children carry Sammy from place to place using the handles sewn on his back. Since he's "sleeping", they have to be very quiet and move slowly, so they won't wake him. Sammy can be made from fabric or panty hose stuffed with batting.



A Barrel of Apples

This transition activity involves moving from a quiet activity to another location. The empty apple barrel (cardboard cutout) is located near the start of the next location, or by the exit door. The apples are laminated cutouts with each child's name written on it. When the teacher calls out a name, that child takes the apple, walks to the barrel, and places the apple in it. The cutouts can easily be attached with velcro, magnets, or tape. The theme can be adapted to any season.



Schedules and Transitions Checklist

Staff Child Ratio:	Yes	No	Comment/Suggestions:
1. Is the schedule realistic for the number of children and adults present in the room during each activity period?			
2. Are all staff members available to help during times when children seem to need the most adult assistance?			
Balance of Activities:	Yes	No	Comment/Suggestions:
1. Are active and quiet times interspersed throughout the program day?			
2. Is there an appropriate balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities?			
3. Is there a balance of structured and unstructured activities?			
4. Are children able to either observe or participate in most activities?			

Transitions:	Yes	No	Comment/Suggestions:
1. Does the schedule provide overlapping or simultaneous activities to avoid having children wait for transitions?			
2. Are children prepared for transitions before they occur (e.g., using cues, rules)?			
3. Have you defined specific responsibilities for all staff during transition times?			
Teacher Schedules:	Yes	No	Comment/Suggestions:
1. Have you defined specific tasks for all staff throughout the program day?			
2. Are staff assignments clearly posted in the classroom each day?			
3. Have you devised systems for effective communication <i>during</i> the program day?			

Schedules and Transitions: Case Study

Description of the child: Zachary is a 4-year old boy with a mild language delay. On occasion, he acts out in the form of taking toys from other children, running away from teachers and is often noncompliant.

Description of the classroom: The preschool classroom has 12 children and two adults, the primary teacher and an assistant. The classroom is a 20 x 20-foot room, in which all classroom activities (except recess) take place.

Problem: At 10:00 the teachers announce to the children that it is time to move to the play area of the classroom for toy time. Zachary looks forward to this time more than any other part of the day. He enjoys playing in the clothes box and with the train set. At 10:25, the teachers approach the play area and begin prompting the children to pick up toys and get ready for snack. Zachary starts throwing toys at the teachers and other children.

Solution:

Solution: Since we know that Zachary likes play time very much, it might be difficult for him to leave the area at the end of the period. There are several things that could be implemented to make the transition to snack easier for Zachary. One would be to give a signal or warning that play time is nearing an end. A “five more minutes” signal would work well here to prepare Zachary for the change in activity. Another would be to give him a job during transition, such as helping prepare snack or giving the “five more minutes” signal to his peers. He could also be paired with a transition partner who could help him make the transition—a peer or adult could become part of a game to move from one activity to another.

Jack, S. L. & Lindeman, D. P. (1998). *Environmental support for positive behavior management*. Parsons, KS: Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.