

Use this Tip Sheet as a companion to the “Easing Transitions” Tip Sheet.



Toddlers

Have 2, 3, or more ideas prepared at all times! Keep a list in the classroom and refresh it often.



Move Like A... To encourage the children to move from one space to the next, tell them to move like a bear, like a cat, like a snake, like you’re in water, etc. Be prepared to model each choice with enthusiasm!

Musical Activities: Use a specific song to indicate that it's time to do something. For example, try playing “Flight of the Bumblebee” to indicate that it’s time to line up or clean up.

What's in the Bag? Put a toy or common object in a paper bag. Poke a little piece out of the top, or have youth feel the object through the bag and guess what it is. This is a great distraction during diaper or clothing changes!



Aim for activities that require little to no materials.

Preschool



Statues: As you play music, have the children move (cleaning, moving to a different center, etc.). Every minute or so, stop the music, and the children have to freeze in whatever pose they were in when the music stopped.

Hand Says or Roll-a-Movement: While waiting in line or while preparing to move to a different activity, designate three different movements to three different numbers. For example, one might equal hopping in place, two might mean touch toes, and three might mean stretch fingers to the sky. Roll dice or teacher can “roll” fingers behind their back before revealing the number.

Guess the Animal: Staff tells youth, “I’m thinking of an animal,” then describes the animal without saying what it is. Can they guess?

Popcorn on a Train: Sing in a jazzy melody, “Popcorn on a train, watch (child’s name) do their thang.” This song can be used to support movement to another activity. For example, the children might be sitting in a circle while the teacher sings the song. All are encouraged to sing along and clap. The person “doing their thang” is dancing in the middle. After they are finished, they wash hands for lunch.

Hello: Ask the children to demonstrate how animals say hello. For example, an elephant might raise their trunk to say hello. Give children the opportunity to come up with their own ideas. For toddlers, use puppets or stuffed animals to make the activity more concrete.



Be animated to pique youth interest.
The more you commit, the more youth will commit!



School-Age

Progressive Story: Staff or a child can start telling a story, and each child adds one sentence. You can do this in line as they move from one place to another or in a circle.

Transition Beatbox: Each person in line comes up with a unique sound (snaps, claps, siren sound, etc). One person is the “mixmaster,” and they point to different people to make their sounds creating their “music.”

Would you Rather? Ask “would you rather” questions and, depending on their answer, the children move to a different side of the room/sit/raise their hand. For example, “Would you rather be really small or really tall?” For younger children, make it a guessing game (curl into a ball and ask, “Am I really small or really tall?”)

Laughing (or Silent) Toes: Standing in a circle, everyone must look down at someone’s (not their own) feet in the circle. When the teacher says, “Look up,” everyone must look at the face that belongs to the feet they were looking at. If you and another person are looking at each other, you point to each other and laugh (or give a silent high five).

Teens



Search online for group icebreakers, team building activities, or theater games for additional ideas!

Riddles and Brain Teasers: Have several prepared riddles or brain teasers to challenge your group. They can work together to solve or try to solve on their own.

Celebrity: One person acts out a celebrity (make it extra challenging by doing it silently) and the group asks them “yes or no” questions to figure out who they are. Whoever guesses correctly becomes the next performer.

Use technology! There are many group charades, celebrity, or taboo-style game apps. Allow teens to play during breaks or downtime – but they must include everyone in the group.

Going on a Picnic: In a circle or line, someone starts by saying, “I’m going on a picnic and I’m bringing (name something that starts with the first letter of their name).” You can do different variations of this game: make it a memory challenge by having each youth list what everyone in front of them has said before they name their own, or you could make the requirement a secret (in this example, starts with the letter of their first name) and if a teen gets it wrong, they move to the back of the line to try again.

Bizz Buzz: In a circle, players start counting, one at a time, substituting BIZZ for the number six and multiples of six and BUZZ for the number seven and multiples of seven. If a player makes a mistake, the whole group must start again.