

P.I.T.C.H. Classroom Checklist: Temporal Environment

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The Temporal Environment includes the management of the daily structure of routines, activities, and transitions. Use this checklist to review your classroom routines, schedules, and activities to ensure you are optimizing your day and promoting harmony. It is not an exhaustive list, rather a starting place for designing high-quality learning environments.

Create your daily schedule

- Make a list of all activities that are required with the number of minutes included
 - Mealtimes, rest periods, outdoor times, specialists, child-initiated play, clean-up, music & movement, arrivals, departures, circle time(s), centers, etc.
- Calculate the number of minutes for teacher-directed activities, child-led activities, transition times, physical needs time (rest, potty, meals)
- Calculate the number of transitions.

*Partial list of what may be considered transitions in your classroom or program:

- From one physical location to another
- From one activity to another
- From one heart rate level to a different one (running outside, sitting quietly)
- From one teacher to another
- From preferred activities to non-preferred
- From awake to asleep or vice versa
- From hunger to satiation
- From heated areas to cooler areas or vice versa
- From anxiety to calm and vice versa
- From small groups or individual work to large groups
- From construction to destruction
- From home to school and vice versa
- From instant gratification to delayed gratification

**For some young children, moving from one activity to another (e.g., bus to classroom, cubbies to book reading, art time to lunch) results in confusion, frustration, and challenging behaviors. Ergin, et al., (2019) found that the average preschooler spends 25-30% of their day engaged in transitions. Does your classroom have more, the same, or less than the average? What can you do to reduce the number of transitions in your classroom daily routine?*

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Create your daily schedule (cont.)

- Create a visual schedule of your day
 - Vertical alignment
 - Real pictures of your children in scheduled activities (or activity areas)
 - Language corresponding to picture
 - Place at eye level of the child
 - Use a visual marker to identify your current place on the schedule (e.g., clothespin, velcro, etc.)

Preparing Children for Transitions

- Create a transition plan
 - Transition plan should relate to the theme
 - Children have an active role in the transition activity
 - All teachers engaged in transition activity
 - Teacher disposition loving and joyful
- Transition plans varied to meet the needs of the children
 - Music
 - Movement
 - Heavy work
 - Vary the planes, speed, rhythm
 - Language and Literacy
 - Rhymes
 - Finish the story
 - “Who/What Am I?”
- Transition cues
 - Visual (e.g., picture cues, visual timers, turning off lights, etc.)
 - Auditory (e.g., bell, songs, etc.)
 - Kinesthetic (e.g., clapping, follow the leader)
 - Child-led

**Ensuring that all transition activities fall within the children’s Zone of Proximal Development creates learning opportunities for physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic development.*

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Supporting Challenges to the Schedule

- Allow children to take a break from challenging activities when necessary and appropriate
- Remind children of the schedule throughout the day (referencing posted daily schedule)
- Create portable schedules that children can carry with them as visual reminders of the sequence of activities
- Limit the amount of time/number of transitions across the day, considering the transitions that can occur within activities such as circle time (e.g., the story is read, weather is checked, movement or musical activity occurs, attendance is taken, schedule is reviewed)
- Teach and practice what is expected of children during transitions

**Consider appropriate developmental expectations for length of sitting time, attention span, physical needs, passive vs. active learning, etc.*

Considerations When Planning the Schedule

- Reduce frustration by allowing ample time to complete activities
- Provide alternative activities for early finishers
- Provide a method for documenting and/or securing unfinished work
- Increase transitional challenges as children mature throughout the year

Continue to develop your skills as a teacher to plan for the following:

- Time management skills and classroom expectations
- Social and emotional development including an enhanced sense of security
- Independence and reliability
- Academic readiness
- Healthy habits
- Language development
- Social interactions