Transition Strategies

The following songs, chants, poems, and fingerplays can be used at transition times to ensure that these times in the day are opportunities for language and literacy teaching. They will provide meaningful activities for children that cut down on idle “wait time.”

Perpetual Preschool Website
http://perpetualpreschool.com/transitionideas.html

When you excuse little ones for snack or lunch sing a song to let them know what time it is. Here is one- Have children hold out their hands and show you their "poppers". Ask them where they want to pop (head, hands, knees, etc...)

Popping popcorn
Popping popcorn
pop pop pop
pop pop pop
Popping Popping popcorn
Popping popping popcorn
pop pop pop
pop pop pop
POP!!!!

Transition times require a lot of thought because these unstructured times can be difficult for children. Here is one transition that worked for me in a preschool setting:

Point to the window
Point to the door
Point to the ceiling
Point to the floor
Point to your elbow
Point to your knee
Point to you and point to me.
It gets their attention on you!
When settling down for a quiet time we recite the following rhyme:

Here are grandma’s glasses (put thumbs and forefingers together and place over eyes).
Here is grandma’s hat (form teepee on head with hands.)
And here is how she folds her hands and lays them in her lap.
Here are grandpa’s glasses (form circle on eyes with fingers and thumbs. I usually use a deeper voice)
Here is grandpa’s hat. (teepee on head)
And here is how he folds his arms just like that. (Put arms akimbo.)
(Children may have to be shown how to put arms akimbo the first time.)

I have found a fun way to get the children’s attention during transition times. I begin playing a game called “If You’re Listening to Me”. It is similar to Simon Says but I begin each phrase with “If you're listening to me...” then fill in various directions like ...touch your nose, ...put your hands on your hips, etc. I lead the group and before you know it everyone is playing along giving you their undivided attention. Then it is easy to sneak in any other instructions.

Also, an attention-getter I have used before is: “If you can hear my voice, snap your fingers...if you can hear my voice snap your fingers...etc.”, until you have everyone’s attention—(speak in a very soft voice.)

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**Hands**

Hands upon my head I place
Upon my shoulders and on my face
At my waist and by my side
And then behind me they will hide
And then I’ll raise them way up high
And let my fingers fly, fly, fly
With a clap, clap, clap
And a one, two, three
Lets see how quiet we can be

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**The Clock**

Tick-tock, Tick-tock
Tick-tock says the clock.
Little boy, little girl,
Time to hear the teacher.
(or: wash our hands, go outside, put toys away, etc.)

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**Countdown**

Five
Four
Three
Two
One
Teacher’s Turn!

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**A Transition Poem**

Caterpillars bump
Worms wiggle
Bugs jiggie
Rabbits hop
Horses clop
Puppies bounce
Kittens pounce
Lions stalk
But . . .
I walk

---

Dr. Jean – Jean Feldman

**Here is a Turtle**
Here is a turtle. (Hold out fist.)
He lives in a shell.
He likes his home
Very well.
When he gets hungry, (stick out thumb)
He comes out to eat, (wiggle thumb)
Then goes back
Into his house (tuck thumb back into fist)
To sleep.

**Color Chant**

If you're wearing RED,
Put your hands on your head.
If you're wearing BLACK,
Then touch your back.
If you're wearing BROWN,
Touch the ground.
If you're wearing GREEN,
Wash your hands real clean.
If you're wearing BLUE,
Put your hands on your shoe.
If you're wearing PINK,
Then think and think.
If you're wearing GRAY,
Have a nice day.

If ORANGE is what you wear,
Then touch your hair.
If you're wearing WHITE,
Squeeze your hands real tight.
If you're wearing PURPLE,
Say, "Murple gurple."
If you're wearing YELLOW,
Wave to your fellow.
You're all looking mighty fine,
And that's the end of the color rhyme.

These games (also from Dr. Jean Feldman, reference above) can be used to have children move from group to centers, to wash hands for lunch or snack, or a variety of other ways:

**Sound Matching**

If your name begins like "baseball" you may……..
If your name begins like "kite" you may……..
If your name begins like "sun" you may……..
If your name begins like "wind" you may……..

(And so forth until all of the children have moved.)
**Bibbity Bobbity**

Bibbity Bobbity Boo
Bibbity Bobbity Boo.
Who are you?
Bibbity Bobbity B________.  *(Say child’s name by dropping first letter and substituting “B”)*
You are *(child’s name).*
*(For example: “Bibbity Bobbity Bimmy. You are Jimmy.”)*

The poem below may be used with preschool children at group time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criss-Cross Applesauce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criss-cross applesauce,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a little clap. (clap hands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criss-cross applesauce,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put them in my lap. (put hands in lap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criss-cross applesauce,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet as can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criss-cross applesauce,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes on me. (point to self)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Animal Rhymes**

Children listen to the “clues” in these rhymes to determine the animal.

I give you milk.   “Neigh, neigh,”
I say, “Moo moo.”   I gallop and run.
On the grass and hay   I’ll give you a ride
I chew and chew.   That’s lots of fun.

“Oink, oink, oink,”   Waddle, waddle, waddle,
Is what I say.   “Quack, quack, quack.”
In the mud   My feathers can be
I like to play.   White, yellow or black.

I like to sleep.   “Baa, baa, baa,”
I also “Purr.”   Yes, I have some wool.
I have whiskers   “Baa, baa, baa,”
And very soft fur.   Three bags full.

“Woof, woof, work”   I’ll lay some eggs
Give me a bone.   In my nest.
If I’m your friend   “Cluck, cluck, cluck,”
You’ll never be alone.   I’ll do my best.

From the website:  [http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems27.html](http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/songspoems27.html)
**The Elephant**

An elephant goes like this and that,  
(pat knees)  
He's terribly big,  
(hands high)  
And he's terribly fat;  
(hands wide)  
He has no fingers,  
(wiggle fingers)  
And has no toes,  
(touch toes)  
But goodness gracious,  
What a long nose!

**Caterpillars**

“Let’s go to sleep,”  
(wiggle your fingers)  
The little caterpillars said,  
As they tucked themselves  
(interlock fingers as if praying)  
Quietly in bed.  
When they awake  
By and by  
(palms up, cross over hands)  
Each one will be  
(clasp thumbs and flutter fingers to make a butterfly)  
A pretty butterfly.

**Wiggle Wobble**

Heads go wiggle, wobble,  
(wiggle head from side to side)  
Wiggle, wobble,  
Wiggle, wobble,  
Heads go wiggle, wobble,  
Then they STOP.  
(freeze)

Hands go wiggle, wobble,  
(wiggle hands)  
Wiggle, wobble,  
Wiggle, wobble,  
Hands go wiggle, wobble,  
Then they STOP.  
(freeze with hands in lap)

**A, B, C: One Thing About Me**

Teacher says, “A,B,C: One Thing About Me.”

Point to child who says his name and one thing he likes that starts with the same letter as his name.

(Examples: “Jamal likes jellybeans.” “Sophia likes spaghetti.”)
Excerpted from *Teachable Transitions* by Rae Pica (Beltsville MD: Gryphon House, 2003):

**Good Morning, Good Morning.**

Use this fingerplay with the group as a whole or with children who've arrived before the rest of the class:

*Good morning, good morning* (clap-clap) (clap-clap)
*Good morning to you.* (spread arms wide)
*I'm happy to be here.* (trace shape of a smile with pointer finger)
*I hope you're happy, too!* (point at children; they point at you!)

**Cleanup Imagery**

Ask the children to clean up while pretending to be:

- Vacuum cleaners
- Elves
- Garbage trucks
- Giant cranes

**Toward the Door**

Challenge the children to move toward the door as if they were:

- A butterfly floating
- An eagle soaring
- A cat sneaking up on a bird
- A weightless astronaut

**Hey, Hey, It's Time to Eat**

Sing the following to the tune of "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here":

*Hey, hey*
*It's time to eat.*
*We're so glad it's lunch (snack) time.*
*We're so glad it's lunch (snack) time.*
*Hey, hey*
*It's time to eat.*
*Let's not wait a minute more!*

**Instant Replay**

Ask the children to move to their mats for nap or rest time as though in slow-motion instant replay. They can also act out a scene along the way!

**The End of the Day**

Chant with the children:

*It's the end of the day*
*Almost time to go.*
*Tell us, [Sam],*
*What do you know?*

The child called on demonstrates something learned during the day! Time permitting; the rest of the children can replicate what they see.
From Sonja Dunn’s Book:

**Cleano**

We wash our hands with a rub, rub, rub.
We take a bath with a scrub, scrub, scrub.
We take a swim with a glub, glub, glub.
    Rub, rub, rub.
    Scrub, scrub, scrub.
    Glub, glub, glub.
    Cleano, Cleano.
    Rub, scrub, glub.

**Husha**

Husha, husha, husha.
    Baby’s sleeping.
Husha, husha, husha.
    Momma’s leaping.
Husha, husha, husha.
    Daddy’s sweeping.
Husha, husha, husha.
    Sister’s creeping.
Husha, husha, husha.
    Brother’s weeping.
Husha, husha, husha.

The following are transition strategies that I have used for years – Source Unknown:

**Everybody Say ONE, TWO, THREE**

While clapping hands loudly say, “Everybody say ONE... TWO... THREE.”
Then in a normal voice say the same words while lightly slapping knees. Finally whisper the words while rubbing palms together to make a “whispery” sound.

**Let’s Play Copycat**

Call and response – say the words as you clap the pattern:
"Let’s play Copycat."
"Copycat"
“I’ve got a cat.” (Make whiskers on face with fingers.)
“My cat is fat.” (Spread hands apart to indicate “fat.”)
“My cat wears a hat.” (Use hands to make a pointed hat on head.)
“Copycat.”
Clap, Slap, Pat

Begin a pattern by clapping your hands and slapping your thighs. Children will join in as they recognize what you are doing. Change the pattern (ex. Clapping hands, patting head). Continue through several patterns. Finish by putting your hands in the air and shaking them.

Some additional websites that include transition activities (both preschool and elementary activities are on some of these, so you will need to choose the appropriate ones for younger children):


http://drjean.org/

http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/Tips/Attention_Getters/

http://songsforteaching.com/allard/boomchikaboom.htm

http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/newsletter/10_4NL_3.asp