



Transitions: A Natural Part of the Day

by Laura Mason Zeisler

Editorial Board

- Susanne Barrach, ACEI
- Jennifer DeFrance, RIAEYC
- Constance Lepine, FCCHRI, Inc.
- Joseph Morra, Newsletter Editor, CHILDSPAN
- José Luis Suazo, Spanish translator

The Rhode Island Early Childhood Newsletter is published by CHILDSPAN, Rhode Island's Child Development and Education Training System; Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children; the Rhode Island Department of Education; Family Child Care Homes of Rhode Island, Inc.; and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services through the Child Care Development Block Grant.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| Letter from the Editor | 2 |
| CHILDSPAN News | 2 |
| Statewide Calendar of Professional Development Opportunities | 2 |
| Internet Information | 2 |
| List of Agencies Serving Children, Families, and Educators | 3 |
| Children's Literature Reviews | 4 |

Transitions can be expected through the day in any early care and education program. Teachers hope to create and maintain a nurturing environment that facilitates children blossoming in all areas of growth. As a result, planning transitions with the intent to establish a sense of predictability, dependability, and security is key.

Early in a child's day she/he experiences an emotionally charged transition: separating from a significant adult in her/his life. One effective transition "tool" is to have a photograph of the child's family in her/his cubby. The idea is to form a bridge between home and your program. Establishing a warm, trusting relationship with each child helps to ease the separation for both parent/guardian and child.

Children need time to transition into their day. It helps when children have at least fifteen minutes to adjust to being at the program. There are times, though, when leaving the house on time in the morning is a challenge for some families; it sometimes results in children being rushed through their good-byes, as well as minimizes or eliminates this necessary "warm-up" time. An article in *The Well-Centered Child* newsletter (written for parents/guardians) offers effective ideas for getting out of the home in a timely way.

This first, early-morning transition may be made gentler with soothing music and children having the choice to engage in a variety of quiet, independent activities. For example, I had one student for whom starting his day with water play helped prevent problems later in the day. Children's books such as *Will You Come Back for Me?* by Ann Tompert, *You Go Away* by Dorothy Corey, and *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn can help make this potentially difficult time a bit easier.

In *Transition Magician: Strategies for Guiding Young Children in Early Childhood Programs* (Editor's note: This book was reviewed in the September 2006 issue of this publication), there are evaluation tools which can help you reflect on potential areas, both physical and chronological, for improvement. The authors list twelve ways to improve transitions, with the majority of the book devoted to their "bag of tricks."

Many teachers have their favorite "five-minute warning" that lets children know they have five more minutes before cleaning up. This warning signal might be turning off the lights, softly ringing a chime or bell, or a buzzing timer. It helps to practice the action of "stop, look, and listen to the teacher" at the beginning of the school year to teach children what the signal means and what your expectations are.

Sometimes there is a child who runs around the room or uses another disruptive action as soon as the signal is given. Teachers can help this child be more successful. If another adult is in the room, let her/him know that you are about to give the signal so that this adult may sit next to the child to help her/him notice and listen to the signal. This guidance might be a gentle hand on the child's shoulder or a whisper in her/his ear about expectations.

There are areas that take longer to clean up such as blocks. In these areas, children benefit from an additional five minutes for cleanup, along with some adult help. A kitchen timer is one way to keep track of time elapsing, but another effective tool is Time Timer®. Set the dial to the desired amount of minutes. A red wedge appears, which represents the exact amount of time that will elapse. As each minute passes, the

(continued on page three)

Letter from the Editor

I am always surprised when winter either stealthily creeps up on me or comes charging at me full force. You would think that living in Rhode Island all my life, I would be used to this subtle or brazen transition. However, being a warmer weather person, it usually takes me awhile to adapt to this new change. If I have a challenging time transitioning to an event *out of my control*, imagine what a child may experience when faced with a new teacher, peers, or classroom environment.

I am pleased to bring you Issue 2 of this year's *Newsletter*. Our theme is *transitions*. The lead article offers useful tips and varied classroom resource recommendations to help children transition throughout a typical day. (I also like how the author cleverly references a book that was reviewed in the last issue of this publication.)

The CHILDSPAN article highlights a multitude of upcoming workshops, conferences, and credit-bearing courses in early 2007, designed to help build relationships with children, parents, and community resources as well as enhance program improvement.

One last note: Due to the lengthy articles and the extra children's book review in this issue, there is no professional resource review. It will return in the March 2007 issue.

As always, I am interested in working with both newer and more experienced writers. Send me an email (jmorra@childspan.net) if you are interested in writing for this publication, or even just to let me know if you are eager for spring, like me! Until then, be well and see you next year.

Joseph Morra, Editor

Statewide and National Calendar of Professional Development Opportunities

Mondays, December 11 - 18, 2006

CHILDSPAN, Pawtucket
CHILDSPAN's Two-part
Workshop Series:
Relieving Stress...Naturally
Contact Jessica Baéz: (401) 721-6401

Wednesdays, January 24 - 31, 2007

CHILDSPAN, Pawtucket
CHILDSPAN's Two-part
Workshop Series:
*Discover the Director within...and Have
Fun Doing It!*
Contact Jessica Baéz: (401) 721-6401

Wednesday, January 31, 2007

Location TBA
Workshop:
Basic Rights in Special Education
Contact Suzanne Tobin: (401) 727-4144

Saturday, March 10, 2007

Bryant University, Smithfield
CHILDSPAN's
**Critical Issues in
Child Care Conference:**
*Assessing and Building upon
Children's Strengths*
(with keynote speaker
Jeanine Fitzgerald)
Contact Joseph Morra: (401) 721-6404

Saturday, March 31, 2007

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick
Bradley Hospital's Annual
Parenting Matters Conference
Contact Bonnie Braga at
bbraga@lifespan.org
for more information.

CHILDSPAN News by Shevaun Keogh-Walker

It's hard to believe that the fall season is already coming to an end. As I drive to work I see many yards with recycle bags full of colorful autumn leaves as families and businesses prepare for winter. Early childhood, school-age, and youth programs are also preparing for the winter season as days become shorter, holidays approach, and cold weather looms on the horizon. However, winter also brings the new year, and with it, new goals and new directions.

CHILDSPAN is already preparing for spring 2007! We are also developing new Calendar offerings, coordinating the annual Critical Issues in Child Care Conference, participating in collaborations with both the RI After School Plus Alliance (RIASPA) and the Providence After School Alliance (PASA), and launching a new college credit-bearing course for preschool teachers and administrators.

CHILDSPAN staff members are developing an exciting Spring Training Calendar that will feature training for practitioners working with all ages of children and youth. We are excited to be able to offer a new Child Development Associate (CDA) training series that will be offered in English, but will provide significant support to participants whose first language is Spanish. This new twist on the CDA training will provide the opportunity for all participants to enjoy small group discussion, in-depth writing support, and the benefit of having more complex concepts explained in their native Spanish language. Everyone in this series will benefit as two specialists will co-teach these classes, allowing for breakout sessions on specific topics and individual participant's needs.

Additionally, CHILDSPAN will be offering the *Social and Emotional Development of Preschoolers* Institute this spring. This institute, offering three credits in graduate or undergraduate studies, is intended for experienced early childhood practitioners and administrators. It will include current research on brain development, typical and disrupted development, intentional teaching practices, developmental risk factors, and mental health assessment tools. It is divided into three major topic areas, presented in three distinctly structured segments. Participants may

(continued on page three)

Internet Information

The National Network for Child Care's (NNCC) web site includes a set of 20 articles on transition topics. Some articles are available in Spanish as well as English.

Click on the "Schools and Community" link,
then the "Transition to School" link to access this useful list.

http://cyfernet.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfdb/browse_2.php?search=NNCC

Transitions...

(continued from page one)

wedge becomes smaller until it reaches zero; no red will be evident. There are different size models, as well as one with sound and one without sound.

Janice J. Beaty, in her book *Prosocial Guidance for the Preschool Child*, emphasizes the value of providing extended periods of time for children to “become deeply involved in their own learning. When they are allowed to choose among many interesting activities and given enough time to complete them, children become self-directed in their learning. Behavior problems are decreased and may even disappear.” Look at your daily schedule and see if there are any transitions you can eliminate, or any time periods that could be joined to allow what Beaty describes.

Too often children are put in lines to wait. Waiting too long wastes time and is an invitation for misbehavior. How can teachers eliminate the lines? What else can children be doing? Look at *when* you are having children wait in lines and figure out how you can get children to do the needed activity (hand washing before meals, putting on clothes to go outdoors, brushing teeth, meal time, etc.) without the waiting. One way to make the waiting time significantly shorter is by breaking children into smaller groups. Waiting *between* activities also may cause problems, so prepare in advance all the materials you need for the next activity to avoid waiting periods.

However, if you must wait, what games can you play? Simon Says is one of my standards because it grabs children’s attention and involves movement. No one is “out” when we play, and children get to have a turn being “Simon.” What about the songs you can sing? I have adapted one of Sarah Pirtle’s songs, “Llegó la Hora: Now’s the Time,” to use for many transitions. It is sung in both Spanish and English, and can be used as the group is doing something such as cleanup or brushing teeth, or as the group is moving on to the next activity, such as lunch or going outside to play.

Again, incorporating movement helps children use their bodies in acceptable ways, provides a natural energy release, and is fun.

Transitions are a natural part of the day. Let’s be prepared to make them as easy as possible for children.

CHILDSPAN News

(continued from page two)

register for any segment (15 hours in length) or for the entire institute. Classes will be held in the early evening and one Saturday to meet the needs of busy professionals.

As always, CHILDSPAN is also coordinating our Critical Issues in Child Care Conference, which will be presented on March 10, 2007. The theme of this conference is *Assessing and Building upon Children’s Strengths*, and will include a wide variety of workshops that support children’s mental health and well-being.

To meet the needs of practitioners working with children and youth, CHILDSPAN is collaborating with RIASPA to present a Statewide Afterschool Conference on May 30, 2007. This event will offer practitioners a wide array of professional development opportunities on such topics as program quality, sustainability, staff development, and advocacy.

CHILDSPAN is also collaborating with PASA to provide technical assistance to youth programs as they participate in a pilot project focusing on the RI Program Quality Assessment tool. Youth programs in Providence are working on continuous program improvement using this tool with technical advice and support, and will also help PASA evaluate the assessment process.

As usual, CHILDSPAN is working hard to bring innovative and individualized services to you and your programs. We understand how busy you are, and respect your commitment and dedication to the children and youth in your programs. I hope you will all celebrate your accomplishments this season and in the new year.

Professional Resources in Rhode Island

Aquidneck Island Directors’ Association
Pam Griffiths, 683-0991

Child Care Support Network (CCSN)
Missy Deitrick, 222-5372

Children’s Friend and Service
Beth Sousa, 276-4336

*CHILDSPAN:
Rhode Island’s Child Development and
Education Training System*
Shevaun Keogh-Walker, 721-6400

*Family Child Care Homes of
Rhode Island, Inc. (FCCHRI)*
Maria Belliard, 461-8908

Mental Health Association of Rhode Island
Cynthia A. Barry, 726-2285

Options for Working Parents
Julie Valladeres, 946-2300
or 800-244-8700

Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island (PCARI)
Katherine Begin, 728-7920

Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP)
Joyce Butler, 490-9960

*Rhode Island Association for the Education
of Young Children (RIAEYC)*
Jennifer DeFrance, 831-1219

*Rhode Island Child Care
Directors’ Association (RICCDA)*
Kim Maine, 294-3510

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Elizabeth Burke Bryant, 351-9400

*Rhode Island School-Age Child Care
Association (RISCCA)*
Erica Saccoccio, 738-7813

Rhode Island Head Start Association
Mary Nugent, 245-2833

*Rhode Island Head Start
Collaboration Project*
Lawrence Pucciarelli, 462-3071

*Rhode Island Parent
Information Network (RIPIN)*
Vivian Weisman, 727-4144
or 800-464-3399

*URI, CE, Children, Youth,
and Family 4-H Program*
Marilyn Martin, 277-5255

Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

***The Rhode Island Early
Childhood Newsletter***

PRESORT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Providence, RI
Permit No. 1286

VIEW US ON THE
INTERNET AT:
WWW.CHILDSPAN.NET

Children's Literature Reviews

by Bonnie Lilienthal

Masurel, Claire. (2001). *Two Homes*. New York: Candlewick Press.

In this simple, matter-of-fact picture book, a young boy named Alex conveys what it feels like to travel back and forth between the homes of his divorced parents. Both homes are filled with love and warmth, and Alex obviously feels safe and secure in each location. The author concentrates on small, domestic details that are important to children. There is no conflict in this story, and the subject of the divorce is only implied. This book is a good example of how a young child can successfully transition from one home to another when love is involved. (Ages 4 – 6)

Carlstrom, Nancy White. (1990). *I'm Not Moving, Mama!* New York: Macmillan Publishers.

Moving can be a stressful experience for a family, but it can be especially overwhelming and fearful for children, who find comfort and security in familiar surroundings. Throughout this reassuring story, Little Mouse emphatically informs his mother that he will *not* be moving into the family's new home. Gently and without reproach, his mother reassures him that they can share the same experiences and duplicate their environment in the new house. She acknowledges Little Mouse's feelings, yet also lets him know she would be sad if he stayed behind. Ultimately, she convinces him to come along. This book will act as a fine springboard for discussion for families contemplating moving. (Ages 4 – 7)

Wallace, Nancy Elizabeth. (2003). *Baby Day! / El Día del Bebe!* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Available in both English and Spanish, this story relates—in crisp, brightly colored, paper-cut illustrations—the everyday routines of a baby (eating, bathing, reading, etc.). Although there are no siblings in the story, it may be used with an older child to help her/him adjust to the activities and schedules that a new baby brings to the life of a family. (Ages 2 – 6)