

Preschoolers and Transitions: Lining Up



How often do you ask the children in your class to quietly line up? Consider the following:

Why a line? Why quiet?

“Because they will need to do it in kindergarten” is not a sufficient answer!

Children learn about the importance of lines in our culture in many ways (trips to the grocery store, the bank, the post office). They don’t need to be drilled on standing in a quiet line all day in preschool. Do what is developmentally appropriate for them now!

Stop, reflect, and assess the situation.

- 1) Decide whether the situation calls for quiet and/or controlled movement. Realize that sometimes neither is required, sometimes one or the other is required, and occasionally both quiet and control are needed.
- 2) Choose a strategy to get children from point A to point B or from one activity to another. Ensure that your strategy is intentional and enjoyable.
- 3) Remember that preschool children are competent learners with whom you can share control of activities.

Here are some strategies to try

- 1) Walk in pairs or small groups (holding hands if appropriate) side-by-side instead of single file. This is more natural and comfortable.
- 2) Move like a favorite animal
- 3) Sing a song

For example, when a line is necessary, use the “Follow, Follow” song and hand positions:

(To the tune of Hey, Lidee Lidee)

“Follow follow follow Juliet

She is the leader now

Follow follow follow Juliet

She is the leader now”

Children stand in a line. Juliet is the leader. She decides where to anchor her hands on her body (for example, hands on hips or on head. This helps prevent pushing and shoving, etc.). The other children follow. At the end of the verse, Juliet goes to the back of the line and the next person is the leader. During this activity the teacher can position himself or herself anywhere in line as needed. Once the children know this song and activity, it can be done silently as well. (Perfect for moving through the hallways of an elementary school site when the older kids are in class!)

- 4) Explain and practice a line method you would use specially for a fire drill or crossing the road. For example, “Safety Line” or “ Important Line.” Give clear directions about the different kinds of transition methods you are going to use for which kind of transition and practice them. Mostly you will be using the strategies for creative ways to transition. Surprise the children sometimes with a “Safety Line” transition!

Have fun with your transitions. Involve the children in inventing new strategies.