

The First Three Weeks of Transitional Kindergarten

First...set your goals for these weeks. Here are mine:

1. Comfort with teacher and classmates
2. Familiarity with routines
3. Engagement in activities

Next...select the assessment artifacts you want to collect. Mine:

1. Book about self
2. Calendar page
3. Photo of child
4. Pillow for each child

Finally...create your daily plans...or modify mine:

Day One:

8:00 Students enter the classroom and put their things in any cubby, cubbies are unmarked. They find their name circle with their name tag on it, put on the name tag and sit on the name circle. Parents mill about, kids cling, someone screams, someone wants a picture of their kid with you on the first day of school, many cry, three parents talk to you at once in two languages (or more)...the entry directions are posted for parents to read so they can help out, the day's plan is also posted. What am I doing? I'm saying hello to everyone, calming kids down, trying to notice who goes with whom, herding kids to the circle. Usually it is very quiet except for crying and nervousness.

Begin routine:

Popcorn (sitting down) Here is where I ask parents to say good-bye...

Stop and Go (standing up)

ABC song with words (I point to letters)

ABC song just music

ABC song (HWOT There's a Dog In School) Pass stuffed dog around circle.

Name activity/introductions...(DO it your way.)

8:30ish Tables are prepared with independent activities, as children sit, I introduce the tables, explain the signal for stopping and the procedure for stopping, practice it, and then release them from the circle a few at a time to choose an activity. They can freely change activities, but cannot get out other classroom materials...they must stay with what I have chosen. I make notes and wander around the classroom with my camera and take first day photos. If I have a helper, they also engage with the children. I practice the stop signal several times during the free activities and then release the children to return to their 'independent work.'

9:15ish Signal for stopping given and clean up procedures reiterated. Everyone helps until the work is done. Return to name circle and sit down when room is picked up.

Hand washing demonstration lesson. Children wash their hands for snack. Washing hands is one of the most time consuming activities! I sing with the children while 3-5 wash their hands and return to circle. It takes a long time the first weeks!

9:30 Snack at tables in the classroom.

9:45 We go outside and tour the playground and get an introduction to signal for lining up. We practice where to line up.

10 Recess

10:30 Line up. Children enter the classroom and find their circles and sit down. I explain story time expectations and read, "Is this You?" We all have a good laugh!

10:50 I take the children to the lunch area and explain the procedures. We practice.

11:00 Lunch (our first day is minimum)

11:30 Children line up and enter the classroom. I explain 'Break Time' and give each child a blanket. We take a 10-15 minute quiet time. Then we fold the blankets together and they put them in their cubbies.

11:50 I help the children pack up to go home.

If there is time, I model calendar activities and count with the children.

11:15 We line up in two lines...the line for the bus and the line for adult pick up.

Day 2

Roll

Opening Circle

Tables

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Read "Our School"

*Tour school and take photos to make a class slide show or book

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table,
etc...you choose

Clean up

Closing Circle...reread, "Is this You?" Introduce the idea that, hey!, we could each
make a book!

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

*I drop the pictures into a slide show...or just slip the card into the computer to
show the pics on the overhead.

Day 3

Roll

Opening Circle

Introduce rotating to tables and staying with your group! Practice really quick rotations, signals, doing your work, what to do when you finish...lots of praise! (The first time we do this, the children literally only have to go to the table, sit down, pretend to work, listen for the signal, pretend to clean up, stand behind their pushed in chairs, and rotate to the next table...4 times!) We have fun with the rotations!

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Read "Our School" again

Show the slide show. Have children help you label the pictures and title the show.

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose

Clean up

Closing Circle...reread, "Is this You?" Introduce the idea that, hey!, we said we could each make a book! We forgot to get started! Let's get on it tomorrow!

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

Day 4

Roll

Opening Circle

Practice rotating to tables and staying with your group! Introduce the concept of teacher table. This is the table where you will be leading an activity. Depending on how many groups you have, set up equally timed activities at the tables.

Examples: Library, puzzles, coloring, teacher table...white board teacher led copy-cat drawing of a face.

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Read, "Is this You?"

Have 9 inch square blank paper ready for children to draw a picture of their family. Be sure to get their names on them. (I use square paper because then there are no what's the top issues.)

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose. During Classroom choices, circulate with the family pictures and take dictations of who the family members are.

Clean up

Closing Circle...Show the, "Our School," slide show...invite parents to come in and watch it.

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

Day 5

Roll

Opening Circle

Ask kids how to rotate to the work tables. Review the concept of teacher table. Examples: Library, pattern blocks coloring, teacher table...white board teacher led copy-cat drawing of a house.

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Read, "Is this You?" Predict what's next!

Have 9 inch square blank paper ready for children to draw a picture of their house. Be sure to get their names on them.

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose. During Classroom choices, circulate with the family pictures and take dictations about their houses.

Clean up

Closing Circle...Show the, "Our School," slide show...invite parents to come in and watch it...if you didn't yet. Play a name game.

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

Day 6

Roll

Opening Circle

Ask kids how to rotate to the work tables. Review the concept of teacher table. Examples: Scissors, Cubes, Clay, teacher table...white board teacher led copy-cat drawing of breakfast.

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Read, "Is this You?" Predict what's next!

Have 9 inch square blank paper ready for children to draw a picture of their breakfast. Be sure to get their names on them.

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose. During Classroom choices, circulate with the family pictures and take dictations about their breakfast.

Clean up

Play a name game. Teach/play duck, duck, goose.

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

Day 7

Roll

Opening Circle

Ask kids how to rotate to the work tables. Review the concept of teacher table. Examples: Scissors, Coloring picture, Clay, teacher table...9 inch square blank paper...write your name.

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Math activity...demonstrate ABAB pattern. Students build with unifix, tiles, color cubes, whatever you have...best for me when everyone uses the same material. We work on the floor in our circle.

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

*Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose. During Classroom choices, circulate with the family pictures and take dictations about how they got their names.

Clean up

Read an ABC book.

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

*If you have a supervisable outdoor area near your classroom, you might allow one activity to be right outside the door...especially if you are able to have an afternoon volunteer.

Day 8

Roll

Opening Circle

Ask kids how to rotate to the work tables. Review the concept of teacher table.

Examples: Shape cut outs, make clay snakes, cube towers, teacher table...coloring lesson, expectations for coloring, copy-cat coloring of preprinted picture.

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

½ Class...Math activity...review ABAB pattern. Students build with unifix, tiles, color cubes, whatever you have...best for me when everyone uses the same material. We work on the floor in our circle. ½ Class...Draw picture of school.

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

*Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose.

Clean up

Read a Counting book.

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home

*If you have a supervisable outdoor area near your classroom, you might allow one activity to be right outside the door...especially if you are able to have an afternoon volunteer.

Day 9-15

Continue your groups. Add volunteers and make independent tables more involved.

Roll

Opening Circle

Tables

Clean up

Handwashing/Singing

Snack/Recess

Math Activity

Lunch

Break

Calendar Modeling/Counting

Classroom Choices...Big Blocks, Play house, Easels, Clay, Puzzles, Art Table, etc...you choose.

Clean up

Read

Pack up/Sing songs/Go home