Using Music for Children’s Learning and Growth

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Typical Preschool Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-9 a.m.</td>
<td>Arrival time</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Clean up time</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15-9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Circle time</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10 a.m.</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Free choice/structured play</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Playground time</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-1 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Naptime</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Snack time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30-5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Playground time/family pick up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every day is filled with transitions, routines, and activities, many of which are repeated throughout the day. For many children – both those with and without disabilities – transitioning from one activity to the next can be a challenge. Providing structure, predictability, and consistency allows children to manage daily transitions and routines successfully, as expectations are clearly outlined to the child and ideally repeated by everyone in the same manner. Music and sounds can signal and structure transitions and routines. Music also can convey a message or a sequence of steps that needs to be memorized and recalled in different situations.
Musical Transitions

Transition songs, making up new lyrics to a familiar tune, or using an instrument to cue a certain behavior are good ways to announce changes and help prepare children for an upcoming activity. When singing a transition song

1. **Choose a specific transition**
   - E.g.,

2. **Pick a familiar tune**
   - E.g.,

3. **Identify keywords**
   - E.g.,

4. **Fit the words to the familiar tune**
   - E.g.,

5. **Modify the song by including objects or picture symbols when working with children who have special needs**
   - E.g.,

When using sound cues, pair signal immediately and repeatedly with action. Let children take an active part in activating the sound cues themselves. Pair sound cues with picture symbols if children use them.

**References**


Petra Kern, Ph.D., MT-DMtG, MT-BC, MTA, owner of Music Therapy Consulting, has a clinical and research focus on young children with autism spectrum disorders, inclusion, and staff training. She is recipient of the AMTA 2008 Research/Publications Award, editor of imagine, and author of numerous publications. A former scholar at UNC at Chapel Hill, Dr. Kern taught at the University of Windsor, SUNY New Paltz, and currently at Marylhurst University. She serves as the immediate Past President of WFMT, on various editorial boards, and is a frequent international speaker and guest University lecturer. Contact: petrakern@musictherapy.biz