**CLEAN UP**

Another variation on getting the children to clean up, pretending to be vacuum cleaners:  I put a "spell" on the room.

"Dinner will be franks and wieners, make these children vacuum cleaners!  Poof!!!"

The kids will ask me to put the spell on them, and they hurry to get things cleaned up.

To encourage the children to help clean up, instead of singing a song, I ask them if they have strong muscles. Of course, most of them insist that they do. They then pick up all the blocks and show me how strong their muscles are getting. I also ask them to give me 5 after they are done picking up something. This seems to help keep them motivated to clean up.

I had problems with my 3year old class at clean-up time. I made up a song to encourage all of my children. I sang " who is going to pick up blocks, pick up blocks, pick up blocks, who is going to pick up blocks, and be a classroom helper?" and repeat with child's name " Sally is picking up blocks, and repeat above. It is a simple song and it really works.

Clean Up Freeze...

Play a song as children clean up from an activity of play time. Throughout the song, stop the music and have everyone freeze. Restart the music to get the little ones moving again. Works really well.

I work with 4 yr olds and when it is time for us to clean up an move onto a different activity I put on our clean up song. We use Rusted Root's Send me on my way. They love it. The song is up beat so they get some wiggles out while cleaning and dancing. They hear the song and without telling them to clean up over and over they know what time it is and begin to clean. I let them know what area they are to be in when the song ends. If there is extra time at the end of the song we dance, dance, dance.

To make clean up time fun for the kids and a lot easier on you, here is a fun way to do this. Make a traffic light out of cardboard, you could either paint red, yellow, and green circles or you can cut them out of construction paper. This can stick on the wall during play time. The green circle can be attached to the traffic light during play time. When it is almost time to clean up, the teacher can put the yellow circle up. When the children see the yellow circle they will know that play time is almost over. When it is time for the classroom to be cleaned the red circle will up. The kids will know that they should start cleaning up.

For cleanup time, especially when the kiddos are very high energy, I have discovered that playing "Beat The Clock" with them works wonders! I ask them who'd like to play, gather them in the center of the room and set the kitchen timer for 5 minutes. We then try to get the room clean before the timer goes off!!! Nearly everyone joins in, putting away toys and books, and the room is tidy in usually about 3 minutes!!! A cleanup that would have taken about 10 minutes or more with much grumbling, is done quickly and easily and then we can move on to other things! We also have been gathering in a circle before circle time and looking around the room to talk about what part is the messiest. Then we ask for volunteers, who can ask others to help. Some of the children who hated cleaning before have gotten excited about it when we have them do it this way.... we have some real cleaning superstars! After it's clean we get in circle again, talk about who cleaned what, applaud everyone, and then proceed with the circle time

**LISTENING TIME**

I use the tune to If You're Happy and You Know It for two transitional songs: first from clean-up to sitting down for story -

If you're ready for a story find a seat;
if you're ready for a story find a seat;
if you're ready for a story check your hands and then your feet;
if you're ready for a story find a seat.

Second for waiting till everyone is seated so all can start snack at the same time:

Put your hands in the air, in the air;
put your hands in the air, in the air;
put your hands in the air,
but we don't want to leave them there!
Sooo...put your hands in your lap, in your lap;
put your hands in your lap, in your lap;
put your hands in your lap and we'll get ready for our snack;
put your hands in your lap, in your lap.

I work with 4 and 5 year olds. Whenever they become very frigidity at circle time, I tell them it is time to "shake those ants out of their pants". We stand up and I begin to sing to the tune of "wash that gray right out of my hair".

We're going to shake those ants out of our pants, we're going to shake those ants out of our pants, So let's dance!

We do this at least four times ending the song very slowly and softly, and then I say, now sit down.

1,2 You know what to do.
3,4 Sit on the floor.
5,6 Your feet you fix.
7,8 Sit up straight.
9,10 Let's listen again.

I use my digital camera to take a photo of each child. I have used them for the following purposes: 1) I printed two of each child for a game of concentration. 2) Transition activity at the beginning of the year: lay one photo of each child face down in the middle of the circle. When a child selects a photo, they say the name of the child in the photo. Good get-acquainted activity.3) I put two photos up each day. These are the children who sit by me all day. That ended a lot of arguing about who would sit by me. Works really well and I use them in alphabetical order.

To get my class to settle down for circle time or story time, I spray them with "magic good listening mist"! I take a clean spray bottle, fill it with water and put the tiniest drop of mint or cinnamon flavoring in it. (Please check for allergies first). When I spray the class I spray pointed to the ceiling and it mists down on the children lightly with a lovely smell. They are To get children into listening position at circle time I use the words "BUBBLE GUM". On the first day we pretend to chew a piece of gum. We take out a piece and stick it to our bottoms. Then we chew some more and stick a piece to our crossed legs. We chew some more and take a piece and stick it to our folded hands. Next we pretend to blow a big bubble and have it pop on our face, sticking our mouths shut and our eyes on the speaker. Now when I want the children's' attention at circle I just say "Bubble gum". Presto we have listening position. "spell" bound by it!

The Laughing Handkerchief

Toss a colorful handkerchief in the air and ask 2-3 children to help out by laughing, stomping, or clapping as loud as they can while the handkerchief is in the air- then stop when it hits the ground .  It won't be long until everyone's attention is on you and your group.

**MOVING ON TO NEXT SPOT**

As many of you know one of the hardest tasks for young toddlers is simply walking from the classroom to the playground. I have found that toddlers love 3 things most, repetition, music, and hearing their names. So on the looooong walk from the classroom to the playground we sing...

Merrily we stroll along, stroll along, stroll along.
Merrily we stroll along on our way outside.
Hello Parker, Hello Taylor, Hello Garrett, how are you today? (continue singing the children's names all the way down the line and finish with)
Merrily we stroll along, stroll along, stroll along.
Merrily we stroll along on our way outside. (or inside on the way back)

Something else I found to be rather helpful with this age is to have a walking rope, the children are still learning what a "line" is this will help be a physical and visual reminder of that concept! Happy Strolling!!

Our school created the idea of "Hips and Lips" for walking in the hall. The students walk in the hall with one finger placed on their lips and the other hand on their hips. I wrote a jingle to go along with it.

Hips and lips is what we do, when we walk in the hall.
Hips and lips is what we do, we don't talk at all.

My preschoolers have learned this song and we sing it every time we line up to leave our classroom

You can signal a transition without using any words at all! Simply wear a different hat for different activities or changes. For example, when it is time to go outdoors wear a silly flowered hat! As time goes on the children will pick up on this visual cue and know it is almost time to clean up, put coats on, etc. Try it!

During transition from group to lunch, I use if...then statements, e.g. "If you have on glasses, then you may go." After about six weeks of using this approach, I let my students take over as the "if" person (the "if" person changes daily). It is amazing what the four-year-olds can do with this. Sometimes we use this chance to discuss different types of clothing, and parts of clothing (overalls, collars, belts, etc.) as well as colors, before the "if" person starts. He/she has to generate ideas of how to get the last child/children to lunch/breakfast.

When we need to line up...one child at a time. I ask everyone to close their eyes. When I tapped them on their head, they may line up. This seems very mysterious and suspenseful, as 1.eyes are closed 2. who will be tapped next. I do not talk at all during this "line up" nor do the children!

Our preschool restroom is down a hallway. I have tried numerous ideas to keep the children under control and interested. Recently I came up with an idea that works really well with bathroom break, centers I want each child to experience and collecting money for field trips. It is wonderful. Here's how it works. I made a list of my student doubled spaced down a page (24 font) I put the list on a clip board and had the number of clothespin attached to the clipboard. As I called a child to the restroom, I (or parent helper) would put the clothes pin on the child's name leaving the names showing of the children who still needed to participate in the activity. This has helped us with computer time, restroom breaks, taking attendance, and other areas. The children no longer have to line up for the bathroom. I get out special books and puzzles for the group to do and I call only a few down at a time. The rest have fun with the books and puzzles while the other teacher is setting out snack. It is so laid back and controlled. This worked so well we have 3 board going during center times and the children or teacher find the child's name when they are finished with the center. At a glance, we know who has been to each center.

At the beginning of the school year we take pictures of all our students, we then cut them out and glue them to tongue depressors and make puppets out of them. We then use them in transitions.

I usually play a game with my preschoolers. For example, we may pretend to be birds and fly to the next room. The children seem to enjoy thinking of new things to pretend to be and they usually transition without any problems.

As our bathroom is not in our room, we have to line up against a wall and file in and out of the bathroom in the hall. It is hard to make the children stay against the wall while the other children are finishing up. I take an extra large paint brush with me and as the children come out, I paint imaginary glue all over their backs and they glue themselves to the wall. The squirmy ones sometimes need a second coat but they usually are glued to the wall by the time the rest of the class is finished. It can even become the "line leader/daily helpers" job for the day! You'd be surprised how badly they'll want to stick themselves to the wall!!

An excellent way to transition a class from one area to the next, such as from center play into circle time is to play "What's in the sack?" Little ones LOVE secrets and surprises and this offers some of both! Just get a sack, either made of fabric or just a brown paper sack, then put something really neat in it, like a koosh ball, or a finger puppet! Now just walk around the room, muttering, "Gee, I wonder what's in this sack?" Eventually the children will begin to flock over, one by one, wanting to find out, what is in the sack! Allow them to each reach in and feel the object, without being able to see it. Now tell them that you are going to show them all what's in the sack, but first "Let's all go to circle time and sit down, so that we can all see." or "First let's go line up at the door and be very quiet, so I can show everyone what's in here!". If you put something really fascinating in the sack the first time you do this, it will work like a charm every time!! =)

I teach 3 and 4 year olds and I made up this clever little poem to help the children know when it's transition time and also when it's time to line up! "If you have on red then you heard what I said. (You heard me say that it's time to line up.) If you have on blue then you know what to do. ( You know that it's time to line up.) If you have on green then you know what I mean. If you have on pink then you know what I think. ( I think you should be getting ready to line up.) If you have on white then you know what's right. (It's right to go to the end of the line and not in front of someone else.) If you have on black then your name must be Jack. If you have on purple then you like to eat Slurple.(a pretend drink that is like the 7 Eleven Slurpee) If you have on Grey oh what a wonderful day! If you have on brown then you better get down. If you have on yellow then you're a nice fellow. If you have on orange, well that's just orange."

Ever since I have been using this poem it has really helped my class learn its colors and it has really cut down the time I used to spend repeating what we were getting ready to do. It has worked so well that should I ever just say that "It's time to get in line," then someone in my class will always say, "Well Miss Tonya you forgot to say red I said, blue you know what to do, etc.!

**I teach preschool, and am always trying to teach something in secret ways in the form of a game. A transition that I have used all year to get the children from our first group time to our activity tables: I have something called puzzle pals. Each child closes their eyes and I give each of them a card that is in the shape of a puzzle piece. I often use letters or numbers. After everyone has a card we go around the circle and everyone has a chance to tell us what they have. Two children match (Both have the letter E) Once everyone finds their "pal" I call them to the tables by letters. I originally did this at the beginning of the year for the children to get to know each other. They enjoyed it so much that I have done this using different topics. (numbers, colors, shapes) I have also used capital letters to lower case letters once the children are familiar with all the letters. The children love this game, and it reinforces their learning.**

We sing this song in out Head Start center to line up to go outside to play...LITTLE RED BOX (you can change the color)

I wish I had a little red box,

To put my (child's name) in

I would take him/her out and XXX (smooch sound 3times)

And put him/her back again

**SOLO Activities:**

Playdough

Puzzle pieces (homemade)..have a buddy and try to find your matching piecies.

Have children help with projects in the room: clean up a particular area, setting out table,

I keep theses items handy in my 4's/5's classroom to help with transitions:

flashlight to play find the shape or color

tennis balls to roll, bounce and play in small groups of 2 to 3

a beach ball to play keep it going