

Self-Managing Areas

3+

Materials self-managing props (see activity)

- What to do**
1. Make transitions smooth and develop children's independence by putting self-managing props for each area or activity in the classroom. For example, if you have a rocking boat, find child-size life vests for the children to use while playing in the boat. Limiting the number of life vests will naturally limit the number who can safely play in the boat together. In addition, if life vests are only worn in the boat, as children move on to another activity and leave the life vest in the boat, they are indicating they are done and another child can have a turn.
 2. Other examples of self-managing props are safety glasses at the workbench, inexpensive nail aprons from the local hardware to transport art items from a shelf to the table, paint shirts at the easels, and protective plastic aprons at the water table.
 3. Create a prominent place for every self-managing prop within the play area. When a self-managing prop is returned to its appropriate place, this is a clear indication to the next child that the area is open for new people, and this also encourages the departing child to think about and plan their transition.
 4. Let children create props if none are easily available; make life vests out of grocery bags, or necklaces from yarn and paper for the home living area.

★ *Lauri Robinson, Big Lake, MN*

Bathroom Signs

3+

Materials

- 2 sheets of card stock
- marker
- hole punch
- yarn

What to do

1. Draw a child's face on one piece of card stock and write "boys" under it.
2. Draw a child's face on the other piece of card stock and write "girls" under it.
3. On the back of each, write, "Please Wait."
4. Punch two holes in the top of each and tie yarn through to make a handle to hang the sign.
5. Hang the signs on the correct door and tell children to flip the sign over to "Please Wait" when they go into the bathroom, and flip it back to the face when they come out. Children will know to wait when another child is in the bathroom.

★ Barbara Saul, Eureka, CA

Button Jar Party

3+

Materials

- two identical clear plastic containers, preferably with a wide mouth
- buttons
- ribbon
- large stickers, optional

What to do

1. Put a ribbon around the mouth of one jar, and put all the buttons in the other jar. Each time a child transitions smoothly to an activity, follows directions, or does something nice, they may take a button from one jar and put it in the jar with the ribbon.
2. All the children cooperate to fill the ribbon jar, and when it is full, have a button jar party with ice cream, popcorn, or cookies.

(continued on the next page)