You could even have a daily song leader to help you. On another note, you might play the students’ favorite music. At the end of their song, they must be ready for the next classroom event. Singing and music are excellent motivators, as well as community-builders. Encourage students to bring their own music (be sure to listen to it first) so they can contribute to the musical selections! My former fourth-graders always were excited to sing “Get Down, Get Funky, Get Loose” (see YouTube™ video).

**Second Tip: Timely Transitions**

Do all students have to transition at once? No! Individual transitioning works well when activities are differentiated or students are working in groups. When a group finishes its activities, each student puts away his or her supplies, cleaning up without disturbing the other groups. Small-group and individual transitions help avoid a mass movement of students putting away marker boxes at the same time!

**Third Tip: Practice Makes Perfect**

This suggestion is the most fun—practice! Sometimes your young learners (older ones too) don’t know how you want them to do something, because their habits were established before they met you! Have students role-play different expectations—in this case, transitioning—so that they may experience success and have fun exploring the concept.

Consider grouping in triads or quads, having each group pull a role-playing card from a hat. The first group might act out an unruly transition—loud students who are not listening, some running to their cubbies, and supplies falling on the floor. You’ll find that students LOVE practicing NOT following the rules! The next card may be an “okay” transition, and then the third card represents a “great” transition. Besides teaching and modeling expectations, role playing also builds community and serves as a good reference when students’ memories lapse: “Remember when we . . .”

Good Luck!

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**Dr. Catherine Pangan**, a former elementary teacher and current professor at Butler University (Indianapolis), loves to help build and support strong, healthy schools. Please send your question for Dr. P. to cpangan@butler.edu. And watch out—she may make a house call!