

Title:	Get Attention
Context:	You want to initiate some kind of transition. It might be time for lunch. You might want to demonstrate an activity. There might be a classroom guest who is going to give a special lesson, or you might have a scheduled time when you use the library, playground, or computer lab. It might be time for a field trip or time to go home.
Problem:	You need to get the attention of students you would like to participate in this transition.
Forces:	A critical piece of the teacher's work in the Montessori classroom is to provide opportunities for children to enter and sustain flow (Kahn, 2003). If a child is deeply engaged in work, the teacher should avoid interrupting the child as much as possible. Respect for the child as a human being requires that you interrupt under conditions and in ways that you would wish to be interrupted. It is also the role of the teacher to model courtesy in the classroom.
Resolution:	<p>Make attention-getting behavior minimal. As much as possible, direct it only at students you would like to engage in the transition. There are three main approaches:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Getting the attention of the class as a whole. All three attention-getters in this category can be wholly directed by the teacher or initiated by the teacher and implemented by children. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Turning off lights.</li> <li>b. Playing music.</li> <li>c. Getting the attention of one child and asking that child to tell other children about the transition that's coming and help prepare for it (e.g., by putting work away).</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Getting the attention of individuals. Making eye contact (a) is the least intrusive. If that doesn't work, there is dispute about whether the next least intrusive interruption is an auditory one (b), a haptic one (c), or a visual one (d). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Making eye contact</li> <li>b. Saying "excuse me"</li> <li>c. Putting hand on shoulder</li> <li>d. Obstructing view of work</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Posting a schedule of regularly recurring activities. Teachers find age-appropriate ways of letting children know that certain activities happen at certain times and ways of letting them know that the time has come without</li> </ol>

direct communication. For elementary children, this may simply be a matter of writing a schedule on the board and having a clock in the room. Children in primary classrooms would likely need additional support. For example, one area of the wall might have visual representations of different activities in the order in which they normally occur, with a moveable arrow that points to the current activity, or a nearby space on the wall that where the teacher places a representation of the current activity. Moving the arrow or placing a new representation in the “current activity space” could signal a transition to a new activity.

Sketch: ???

Resulting Context: Ideally, you got the attention of all and *only* the children you want to engage in transition. Here are some tradeoffs for the different strategies.

1. Getting the attention of the class as a whole. *This strategy is harmful if you don't mean to engage the whole class in the transition. It unnecessarily disrupts the work of children who are not meant to participate. On the other hand, you might want to invite all children to participate, even if some choose not to.*
  - a. Turning off lights.
  - b. Playing music.
  - c. Getting the attention of one child and asking that child to tell other children about the transition that's coming and help prepare for it (e.g., by putting work away). *This could be a problem if children have not been properly prepared for interrupting other children. The teacher must demonstrate this beforehand.*
2. Getting the attention of individuals. Making eye contact (a) is the least intrusive. If that doesn't work, there is dispute about whether the next least intrusive interruption is an auditory one (b), a haptic one (c), or a visual one (d).
  - a. Making eye contact
  - b. Saying “excuse me”
  - c. Putting hand on shoulder
  - d. Obstructing view of work
3. Posting a schedule of regularly recurring activities. *Student preparation is required to habituate the children the looking at the schedule. Need a “critical mass” of students*

*who attend to the schedule and act accordingly, drawing the attention of others for whom the scheduled activity is relevant.*

Related Patterns: Invite, Manage Transition

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