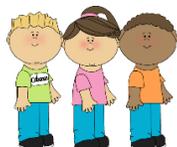


# **Lining up Students for Transitions** **Strategies and Activity Breaks** **For Elementary Students**

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Getting young students to line up quietly and safely, especially during transitions, and then wait for even a minute, can be quite challenging. Instructional protocols which encourage and motivate students to line up and wait, as expected, need to be in place. Once in line, have students do an ‘activity break’ to make the waiting less boring and even fun. Just before it is time to leave, students should show respect and stand with eyes forward, voices off, arms at sides, hands to self, with “windows open” (a small amount of space in front and behind). Then, they will be ready to walk in a safe, quiet, and controlled manner.

**Note:** Several of the ideas are used by permission of PE Central ([pecentral.org](http://pecentral.org)), the premier website for physical education teachers.

## **-Strategies for Lining up Students during Transitions-**

### **1, Color Call**

- When it is time to dismiss, ask first for the students who are wearing something red, then blue, then green, etc. to walk calmly and line up.
- Ask students line up according to eye color. "Those who have hazel eyes can line up now", etc.
- Ask students to line up according to hair color (i.e., brown, red, blonde, etc.)
- Or, vary it and line up by the type of clothing they are wearing (i.e. jeans, t-shirts with letters on them, shoes with ties, etc.

*Submitted by **Mark Manross** who is the Executive Director of PE Central; modified by Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA...*

## 2. Questions and Answers

- One way is to ask questions, for example, if you have an older brother, line up, older sister, younger sister, only child, etc.
- Also, use syllables. For example, if your last name has more than three syllables, you may line up and then I work my way down to one.
- Ask about pets and grandparents, cousins (number of, kind, boys/girls, etc.), this also helps you find out a little about your students life and where they are coming from.

*Submitted by Cyndi McClure who teaches at Bethel Elementary School in Wynesville, NC; modified by Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA*

## 3. Alphabetically (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> graders)

After gathering students in front of you ask the students to line up alphabetically by last name (first name may work as well). This is a good cooperative activity so give them a little extra time to do this. Encourage them to use quiet voices (or no voices at all) while doing this. May want to time this to see how long it takes and see if they can beat their record the next time.

*Submitted by Mark Manross who is the Executive Director of PE Central.*

## 4. Best Behavior

- "I like the way Marvin, Jenn, and Crystal are sitting nicely, you may line up. Make sure you walk." Then have 3-4 more go and if all are doing well ask remaining to line up by walking. Line leaders will need to go to the front.
- "Tommy, Sally, and Mazy would you show us how to walk, keeping your hands to yourself, and form a straight and quiet line at the door." Have them do that and compliment them for doing well. Instruct the rest of the class to, calmly, do the same.
- Variation: "Those of you who are showing great respect will be lining up first. When I tap you on the shoulder, please walk to line up for dismissal."

*Submitted by Mark Manross who is the Executive Director of PE Central; modified by Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 5. Birthdays

Children line up when their birthday month is called. I use the month we are currently in as the first month called, obviously changing it as we go through the school year, and ending with summer birthdays. The last month, called, though is the "I forgot, I don't remember, I don't know" month. Make a point of finding out when those children's birthdays are to help them out next time.

## **-Activity Breaks for Students Waiting in Line-**

### **1. Copy Cat**

Once students are lined up as expected, the teacher announces we are playing Copy Cat. The teacher begins a movement that can be done in place. Then the students copy the movement. The movements are to be done silently. The teacher does this 3 times, then points to a student who now becomes the leader. Encourage creativity.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

### **2. Give Me Five**

Students coming to or leaving an activity session are sometimes a bit hyper and excited. To get their attention and to calm them down, ask them to "**give me three, give me one, give me four, etc.**" We expect them to clap their hands according to the number called out. This gets their attention quickly and the noise stops abruptly. We then continue to give further instructions by telling them that "Now that I have your attention, I need you to listen to the following instructions. Variation: instead of clapping, snap fingers, or fist on fist.

*Submitted by Ken Dyson.*

### **3. Ten Hut**

When the kids are lining up to leave, I tell them if they are quick and quiet, they will get to play **Ten Hut**. After they are in the line, say "**Fall Out**". They can then be messy on the line, i.e., step off, not be in line, chatty, etc. Then say "**Ten Hut!!**" and they are to "snap to attention" by quickly slapping their legs, straightening up, being directly behind the person in front of them, and getting totally quiet. Start counting immediately after saying "Ten Hut" and see how fast they can stand as expected.

*Submitted by Leslie Lynk who teaches at Greenbriar West Elementary School in Fairfax, VA.; modified by Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

### **4. Pantomime**

Once in line, students turn and stand shoulder to shoulder. Tell students that they will be playing "What am I", while they wait. The adult can start or have a student volunteer begin. This person moves, without any sound, while the others try and guess what they are or what they are doing (to guess, they must raise their hands). If a student guesses correctly, he now does a pantomime. If not correct after 3 guesses, the adult asks for a new volunteer.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 5. Rock-Paper-Scissors

Have students play this simple game against the adult leader. If the student wins a round, he/she “raises the roof”. If the student ties or loses the round, nothing happens. After several rounds, have a student step forward and be the next person to beat.

Variation with older students: Can substitute "odds and evens" for rock-paper-scissors". Put out a number (using fingers) from one hand; quickly add your numbers with the adult's numbers. IF you declared even and the sum is even, you win and do the pre-determined exercise. If not even, turn around once and back in the next round.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 6. The HALL Song (K and 1<sup>st</sup> graders)

This is a cool song that the first grade teacher and I use at my school for getting kids lined up and ready to go.

**"My hands are hanging by my side, I'm standing straight and tall.  
My eyes are looking straight ahead, I'm ready for the HALL."**

When you say **HALL**, all children should be quiet and lined up and ready to leave the room. After doing this a few times with the kids they sing it along with you.

*Submitted by Val Shuknecht*

## 7. Quiet as a Mouse (K and 1<sup>st</sup>)

Choose two students to be mice. These two quiet mice walk around the other students who are lined up as expected, not making a sound. They each look for a person who is standing quietly on the line, good posture, hands to self, with eyes forward. Once these students find two other students doing this they tap them on the shoulder and quietly take the spot in line. Now there are two new quiet mice.

*Submitted by Beth Wieck from Overbrook School in Nashville, TN.; modified by Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA*

## 8. Contagion (or Dominoes)

Students are all in line as expected. They all turn sideways so that they are shoulder to shoulder. The adult starts a movement on one end and it “travels” down to the other end and back like “the wave”. Movements can include: jogging in place, shoulder shrugs, holding a squat, collapsing, etc. Let the kids come up with movements to do. Don’t always start the movement at the same end.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 9. **Rain Storm**

With students standing in line, side by side, the adult begins the activity by standing in front of the first student rubbing his hands. This signals the first student to do the same, then the second and all the way down to the last person in line (a light shower). Next, the adult snaps his fingers and the snapping passes down the line (heavier shower). Then, hand clapping begins, followed by thigh slapping, and stomping feet. Lastly, add “lightning bolts” using arms to throw the bolts and jumping at the same time. To end the storm, do everything in reverse order.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 10. **Zip and Zong** (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>)

Students stand side by side facing the adult leader. The leader says either zip or zong and quickly counts, out loud, to five. The student pointed to says the first name of the person on his/her RIGHT if the word said was “zip”. If “zong” was said, the name of the person on the LEFT is to be recited. If the name is incorrect, or the student doesn’t say the name before the count of five, he/she goes to the end of the line. If successful, he/she steps forward and is the next leader to call zip or zong.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 11. **Do What I Say, Not What I Do** (2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>)

The adult leads this activity. He/she says a movement, but does another. Movements need to be done in place. Students do what is said, not what they see. If “caught” doing the incorrect movement, the student touches the closest wall, and then begins again. Older students can be challenged to lead this activity as well. Be creative. Examples: Say “March in place”, but do running in place; say “Shake your head yes”, but shake your head no; say “play the air guitar”, but raise the roof!

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

## 12. **Hand Jive Celebration.**

Quickly, after students are lined up (eyes forward, arms at their sides, windows “open” in front and behind them), they answer three questions: Did I do my best? Was I kind to others? Did I have a good time? (Signal with thumbs up, to the side, or down). Then, the entire group does a celebration hand jive such as: a silent applause, raise the roof, gator clap, stir the pot, sprinkler, fire cracker, touchdown, etc.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

### 13. **Frozen**

Students are standing in line, side by side, facing the adult leader. The adult leader will say a cue related to a topic and then quickly count to five and say “frozen”. The students must make a “statue” of that cue and hold that statue (pose) until the leader says “defrost” (Don’t hold them too long!). If the leader catches a student moving, the student gives the leader a “friendly five” and is back in the next round. The teacher can have students be the leaders. Topics could include: sports, emotions, letters of the alphabet, numbers, shapes, animals, musical instruments, etc.) Examples for emotions would be such cues as: happy, scared, bored, confused, etc.

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

### 14. **Simon Says**

All students enjoy this easy game. The teacher/student leader stands in front and calls out a movement that can be performed in place. If that call is preceded with “Simon Says” the students ARE to do the movement. If the call is NOT preceded with “Simon Says”, the students should not do the movement. If a student performs the movement when he should not, he was “caught” and does 10 “happy feet” (fast feet) in place, then rejoins the group. How many of you never got caught?

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*

### 15. **Telephone**

Students are all standing in line. Whisper a short sentence into the ear of the first person. Then, run down the line to the last person and whisper a message into that person’s ear. On “go” have each student in turn whisper into the ear of the next person (One message will be going down the line and a different message will be going down the line) until it gets to the person at the opposite end (Everyone will be involved with two messages). When the first and last person get the new message, have them announce it. Did either message end up as it started?

*Karen Bagby, Iowa City, IA.*