

Transitions

In the late 1990's, the military funded research to assess the impact of 'Social Mobility' on children. To be clear, Social Mobility refers not to moves that children have from elementary to middle to high school with their peers. Social mobility refers to moves that children make where they change communities, neighborhoods, schools, friends, teachers, etc. Previous to this time, no one had conducted any studies that would have determined if these moves that are so very common, not only in the military but for so many children and families had any impact, positive or negative.

The University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins University determined definitively that the more moves a child has over a kindergarten through high school life time are negative and additive. Children are very resilient and can take a fair amount of adversity and movement, but the research found that at about seven moves, on average, children are far less likely to be successful in school. There is a great deal of variation and some children will 'tank' at three moves, whereas others seem to be able to take far more than seven and still do well in school. The foster child population demonstrates both of these outliers.

The bottom line, however, is that any kind of transitions take their toll on most children, not to mention adults!! How difficult is it to get out of the door to head to work on time, or to leave a crying child and transition into giving a speech? Very! Transitions are Tough! As educators, we need to be keenly aware of the many and varied transitions that our students are dealing with and how little support we give them or the adults that work with them. There are big transitions:

- Home to School
- Pre-School to Kindergarten
- Kindergarten to Elementary School
- Elementary to Middle School
- Middle School to High School
- High School to the University, Military or Work
- New to School Mid-Year
- Alternative to Regular Setting
- Others?

There are also daily transitions:

- Class to Class
- Bus to School
- Lunch to School Work
- Teacher to Substitute Teacher
- School to Afterschool Programs
- Class to Lunch
- Recess to Class
- Others?