

Questions to ask while reading *It Was Supposed to Be Sunny*

Beginning:

- How do you think Laila feels as she prepares for her outdoor party?
- Oh no, the weather changed everything! How does Laila feel now?

Middle:

- Laila was very upset about the unexpected changes.
What are some things she does to feel better?

End:

- When our plans change, what can we do to feel better?
(Adult can show the *Feeling Better...* visual.)
- When did you go through a change that worked out well?

Skills Addressed:

Attention, listening comprehension, feeling identification, prediction, problem-solving, coping, resilience building

15-20 min

Obstacle Course Play

1. Set up an obstacle course with a variety of small transitions and challenges that simulate Laila's experience with change. Start with 3 stations and add or remove, as tolerated by child.
Examples: bear walking, crawling under tables, carrying an item with a unique texture, hopping to circles, mini trampoline, etc.
 2. Adult leads child(ren) through the obstacle course and then has them try it backwards.
 3. Sit down and talk about what was hard and what was easy. Did we feel proud for getting through the hard parts?
- * *Model deep breathing and/or deep pressure, self-hugs if anyone is feeling overwhelmed.*

Advanced: Have the child help you design and build the obstacle course.

Skills Addressed:

Transitions, body awareness, sensory exploration, motor planning, language, using strategies including deep pressure input and breathing, comprehension

10 min

Modeling the “Feeling Better...” Strategies

Either use the whole visual or create individual, laminated cards for child to choose from with the provided strategies. You may also create your own strategy cards that meet your child's individualized needs.

Depending on the child's needs, offer either the entire visual or a group of 2-4 strategies when your child needs a break or would benefit from practicing a coping skill(s).

- When they are frustrated you might say, “Change can be hard but we can do it together.”
- “Let's take a few minutes to help ourselves feel better about the change.
Would you like to do ___ or ___?”
- Offer: “First let's do ___, then let's do ___.”
- Make a visual schedule of what might come next.

Skills Addressed:

Identifying feelings, language, social-skills, perspective-taking, self-regulation

2 min

*embedded
in learning*

Making a “Heavy Work” Transition Buddy

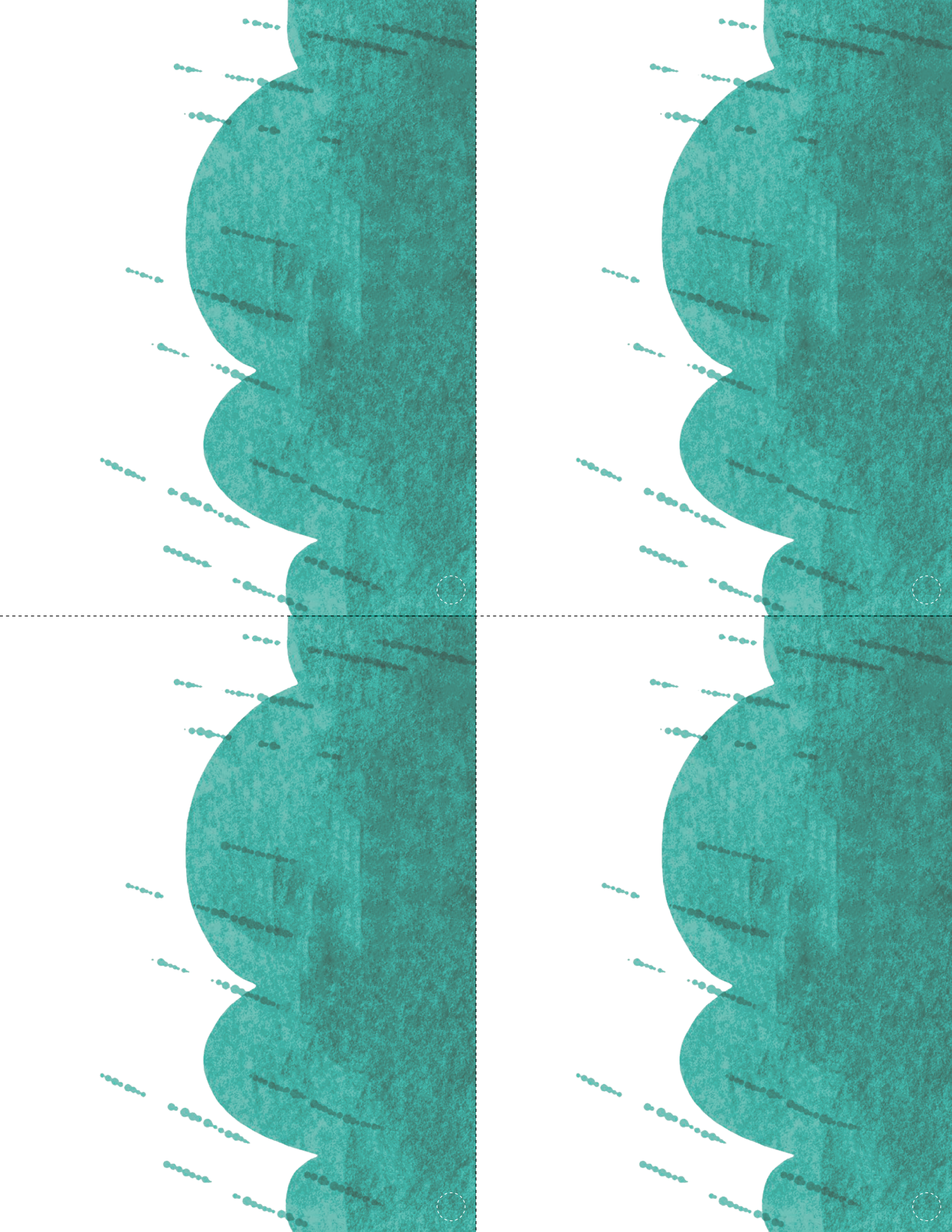
Most people benefit from deep pressure/proprioceptive input to support sensory regulation, especially when frustrated. Make a transition tool that provides “heavy work” input.

1. Use an empty laundry detergent bottle to make a “heavy-work” transition buddy for your learning space.
2. Empty, clean and fill the bottle with water, seal with super glue or glue gun.
3. Individually or in a small group, children paint the bottle, add decorations (*feathers, beads, googly eyes, etc.*). Name your buddy!
4. When students are struggling with transitions, offer them the buddy bottle to carry. The deep pressure can be calming and children will feel proud to carry the buddy they helped create.

Skills Addressed:

Cooperation, making, sensory motor play, teamwork, upper body strengthening and coordination, language skills

20 min



Puppet or Doll Play

There are so many creative ways to play with puppets!

- Adult models what happened in *It Was Supposed to Be Sunny*. Ask how does each puppet feel? Why do they feel like that? What helped them feel better and still have a good day?
- Have two children role play a scene where they practice using a calming strategy when frustrated by unexpected changes. Start in pairs.
- * Focus on what strategies work for the children.
Examples: a quiet space, running around, swinging, jumping, deep breathing, snuggling a favorite toy, using a calming jar, self-talk, talking to an adult, and making a new plan.

Skills Addressed:

Turn-taking, feeling identification, coping skill development, problem-solving, language, comprehension, creativity, motor skills with puppets

15-20 min

Create Calming Sensory Bottles

Children love the visual stimulation and proprioceptive feedback when shaking and holding these calming sensory bottles. Bottles are particularly useful during challenging transitions.

- This is a fun individual or small, center project with adult support.
- Play calming music while creating.

Wet Bottle Directions: Need empty, clean water bottles or spice containers, measuring cup and funnel (to help child pour water into the bottle), warm water, food coloring or liquid water coloring, and glitter, and one of the following: mineral oil, liquid soap, corn-syrup, or glycerin. Fill the bottle about one third full of warm water, add glitter and color, add oil based product.

Dry Bottle Directions: In place of water, color and oil, an adult can also help the child fill the container with rice and small beads and toys.

- * Adult: Use super glue or a glue gun to tightly secure lids.
Check regularly and re-glue if needed.

Skills Addressed:

Fine motor skills, spatial awareness, proprioceptive and visual motor, sensory modulation, self-regulation, developing coping skills

15-30 min

Song: To Itsy Bitsy Spider tune

"The excited children planned for a fun day.

Down came the rain

And washed those plans away.

BUT... they took deep breaths (model big arm-stretch breathing)

And the children still played.

So.. the joyful children still had a great day."

- Model exaggerated feelings as you sing the song.
- Sing slowly and then faster and then slowly again to practice modulation which supports self-regulation.

* In the future, sing with child(ren) when changes happen to arise.

Skills Addressed:

Rhythm and rhyme for early-literacy skills, feelings, language, social skills, reinforcing coping skills

5 min

Mini Feelings Draw

1. Make and cut double-sided copies of the Mini Feelings Drawing reproducible. (Included as a separate page)
2. First, on the face, child draws how they feel when frustrated by unexpected change.
3. Next, have them practice a "Feeling Better..." strategy.
4. On the opposite side, have them draw how they feel after trying the strategy. Try leaving blank feeling faces out at a calming corner with the *Feeling Better... Strategies* poster for child to complete after trying a coping strategy.

- * Using small-sized paper and small/broken crayons helps to develop children's fine motor skills.

Skills Addressed:

Feelings identification, reinforces coping skills, drawing-self, fine and visual motors skills, bilateral hands skills

15-30 min

