



# Transition Toolkit Idea #1

## Cafeteria Tour

This is the first in a series to help your children successfully transition from Preschool to Kindergarten.

The school cafeteria is a new experience for most children transitioning to kindergarten. It's a big space with lots of tables, there are new procedures to learn, and many new people to meet. To help children "experience" the cafeteria prior to kindergarten, you may want to try some of the activities below.

1. Talk with the children about kindergarten and how there will be many new things to learn. Ask the children if they have ever gone to a restaurant. (You may want to name a couple of familiar ones.) Ask the children to share how eating at the restaurant is different from eating at home (e.g., lots of people, lots of tables, you get to pick your food from the menu). Tell the children that in kindergarten they will go to a cafeteria to eat lunch and that it's kind of like a restaurant. Tell them you are going to show a video of kindergarten boys and girls eating in the school cafeteria. Ask them to think about how the cafeteria is different from eating at home. Show the video [Landon's Lunch Time Tour](#). After the video, talk about what the children saw in the video. Help them compare how the cafeteria is different from home.
2. Watch the video again. Focus on the part where children are going through the lunch line. Talk about how there are choices of food and how there are lunch ladies that work in the cafeteria to help. Then, turn your dramatic play area into a cafeteria. Think about how you can have two "settings" in your play area: the lunch line where the food is served and the table area where children will carry their trays to sit and eat. Let the children help set up the serving line and suggest what items might be needed (e.g., trays, serving spoons, aprons).
3. If you eat family style in your center, you may want to set up a "cafeteria" where you serve the children their food and they carry it to their table.

Through talk and play, you can help your children learn about the school cafeteria before they ever get to kindergarten!  
Happy dining!

