

Daily Routine Overview

For Infants and Toddlers

Week 1 Learning Unit

Introduction to the Daily Routine



Children's cultures are foundational to their identity. Each family's culture should be respected and integrated into children's everyday experiences in programs. It is important to use a REDI lens as you interact and plan for experiences throughout the day.

Week 1 Learning Unit Topics

Introduction to the daily routine:

- The importance of a predictable yet flexible daily routine for infants and toddlers.
- Guidelines for organizing daily schedules and caregiving routines.
- Active learning throughout the daily routine.
- Implementing responsive adult support strategies.



Week 1 Learning Unit Topics (continued)

Consider Routines and Schedules

- Think for a moment about your own daily or weekly routine.
- What aspects stay the same?
- What changes?
- How does it feel when things are a little different?
- How does it feel when things change suddenly, (i.e., a family emergency)?
- Is your routine the same as that of everyone else you know? Or is it different?

Thoughts About Routines for Infants and Toddlers

Likely, many of the things you thought of when considering your own routines are also true for infants and toddlers:

- Many aspects of a day occur on a routine basis.
- Some flexibility and overlap is important.
- Too much change and flexibility can be overwhelming or cause dysregulation.
- While many people have similar routines, there are usually some differences in routines.

Key idea: In group care, it is essential to provide a predictable yet flexible routine in which caregivers are responsive to children's individual needs throughout the day.

Why Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines are Important

Children learn

Caregiving routines provide daily opportunities for adults to interact with infants and toddlers in a patient, alert manner so children can participate in and learn through routines.

Children and adults strengthen their bonds

Building strong relationships with children and looking for ways to support their experiential learning is the driving force behind caregiving routines: efficiency is not!



Why Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines are Important *(continued)*

Adults watch and listen to children

Caregiving routines provide opportunities for intimate, one-on-one interactions in which adults can see what infants and toddlers do and say and scaffold (support and extend) their learning across the developmental spectrum.

Adults learn

During caregiving routines, adults slow themselves down to children's pace, look for KDIs (the knowledge and skills that infants and toddlers learn), and begin to see the experience from the children's perspective.



Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines

Guideline 1: Create an overall daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible.

Guideline 2: Incorporate active learning, including adult support into each event and caregiving routines.



Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Guideline #1: Create a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible

- Organize the day around regular daily events and caregiving routines.
- Follow the overall daily schedule consistently.
- Accommodate children's natural rhythms and temperaments.
- Provide a smooth flow from one interesting experience to the next.

How are you communicating with families about their children's home routine and their caregiving practices (i.e., how they put their child to sleep, what feedings/mealtimes look like, diapering/toileting beliefs)? How are you incorporating that information into their child's day at school?

Benefits of a Predictable Yet Flexible Daily Schedule

- Children learn to trust teachers who listen and acknowledge their individual needs, pace, and way of doing things.
- Children trust themselves and their own abilities to predict, anticipate, and influence what will happen next.
- Children gain a sense of ease and comfort when the schedule is suited to their individual temperaments and learning abilities.
- Teachers enjoy the day more because children are happier and less irritable.

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Examples of How to Keep Your Daily Routine Consistent

- The same components of the routine happen each day.
- Components of the routine happen in the same order.
- Changes are infrequent or subtle.
- Components are similar between classrooms but may occur in a different order or last different amounts of time.
- Components of the routine take place in the same space each day.
- Children are supported by caregivers throughout the day.
- Classroom routines reflect children's natural rhythms and are informed by home routines.

Examples of How To Keep Your Routine Flexible

- Parts of the day are shorter as needed based on children's engagement.
- Parts of the day are extended as needed based on children's engagement.
- Parts of the day overlap to allow children to transition at their own pace.
- The routine is adapted as children grow and develop.
- Routines between classrooms vary based on the needs of the children.
- The routine accommodates unusual circumstances such as inclement weather or child illness.

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Guideline #2: Incorporate active learning, including adult support, into each event and caregiving routine

- Be patient with children's intense interest in things around them.
- Value children's need for sensory-motor exploration in each event and routine.
- Share control of the day with children by giving them choices.
- Be alert to children's communication and talk throughout the day.
- Work as a team to provide ongoing support to each child throughout the day.
- Look at children's actions and communications through the lens of the Key Developmental Indicators.

Five Ingredients of Active Learning

- Materials
- Manipulation
- Choice
- Child communication, language, and thought
- Adult scaffolding

How can understanding children's home cultures help teachers to more appropriately support their choices, communication, interest in materials, and participation throughout the day?

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Manipulation

The child has opportunities to explore (with all five senses), manipulate, combine, and transform the chosen materials.

Daily Routine Examples:

- During outside time, children run, throw, crawl, and push materials.
- During group time with materials, children poke, squeeze, prod, and press cookie cutters into the play dough.



Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Choice

Children choose what to do. Since learning results from children's attempts to pursue personal interests and goals, the opportunity for them to choose activities and materials is essential.

Daily Routine Examples:

- During transitions, children choose a way to move to the door to get ready to go outside. Teachers copy their ideas and narrate their actions.
- During rest time, children choose a comfort item and what position to rest in and are able to fall asleep at their own pace. If children prefer, a caregiver may rub their back, sing soothing songs, or offer them a book to look at quietly.



How are all children given opportunities to make choices throughout the day?

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Child Communication, Language, and Thought

Children communicate their needs, feelings, discoveries, and ideas through motions, gestures, facial expressions, sounds, sign language, and words. Adults value, attend to, and encourage children's communication and language in a give-and-take manner.

Example:

- During group times with movement and music, the caregiver asks for children's ideas, copies them, and describes children's actions.
- During feeding time, the caregiver imitates a child who is cooing back and forth while eating.



In addition to supporting infant's and toddler's language and communication development, how is each child's home language valued, supported, and reflected throughout the day?

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Adult Scaffolding

Adults establish and maintain trusting relationships with each child in their care. Adults recognize and encourage each child's intentions, actions, interactions, communications, explorations, problem solving, and creativity.

Example:

- During diaper changing, the caregiver sings and comments on the baby's reaction to the singing and interesting sounds or sights in the environment.
- During choice time, teachers participate in children's play: copying their actions, repeating their words, and following their lead.



As you reflect on your interactions with children, how are you respecting their culture, home language, and abilities throughout the day?

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

Include adult support into each event and caregiving routine

- Be patient with children's intense interest in things around them.
 - While transitioning from outside time, a child notices a bug crawling on the ground. The caregiver acknowledges the child's interest in the bug before continuing to go inside.
- Value children's need for sensory-motor exploration in each event and routine.
 - Provide individual sensory materials that children can mouth on throughout the day.
- Share control of the day with children by giving choices.
 - Giving the child a choice on how to move to the diaper changing table.
- Be alert to children's communication and talk throughout the day.
 - During bottle feeding, the infant stops drinking and coos to the teacher and the teacher responds by cooing back.
- Work as a team to provide ongoing support to each child throughout the day.
 - Throughout the day, teachers pay attention to children's cues, needs, and interests, and support all children regardless of their assigned caregiving group.

Guidelines for Organizing Daily Schedules and Caregiving Routines (continued)

- Look at children's actions and communications through the lens of the Key Developmental Indicators
 - During choice time, a child is playing with the balls. The teacher joins the child's play, covers one of the balls with a blanket, and observes to see how the child responds. (KDI 23. Object Permanence)

For additional responsive strategies to use during each component of the day, reference this week's reading assignment *What Children and Caregivers Do During the HighScope Infant and Toddler Day*.



A peek ahead

Next week, you will explore:

- Components of the daily routine
- How learning happens throughout the day

