

# Daily Routine Overview

*For Infants and Toddlers*

# Week 3 Learning Unit

## *Creating a Daily Routine*



# Week 3: Creating a Daily Routine

## This week, you will explore:

- How to create a daily routine that meets individual needs.
- Gathering information from families about home routines.
- Developing group routines based on individual needs.
- Incorporating home routines into classroom routines.
- Supportive classroom responses to home practices and child development.



# Remember:

## 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 routine.



# Steps for Creating Daily Schedules

1. Gather information about each child's day.
2. Enter each child's information on a grid.
3. Look for activities among children that occur around the same time.
4. Create an overall sequence of events.

After reviewing this week's learning unit you will get to practice doing all four of these steps using information based on a group of fictional children.



# 1. Gather information about each child's day

- Have primary caregivers ask parents what their child's schedule is at home (what time they eat, sleep, wake up, etc.).
- Ask each primary caregiver to share information about each child.

How do a child's family culture, rituals, beliefs, and preferences influence their home routines? How do you combine home routines with the individual and group routines for all the children in your classroom? For example, parents share that they play music from their home culture softly during naptime at home, so you plan to incorporate music suggestions from the family into your naptime.



# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Infant Care Plan

Sample questions provided to parents with their responses:

- How does your child indicate sleepiness?
  - Parent Response: *Rubs eyes, will try to crawl into your lap*
- What kinds of things is your child most interested in exploring at this time?
  - Parent Response: *Books, blocks, cars, balls, kitchen toys*
- Does your child prefer formula or breast milk? How often and how many ounces do they typically take during a feeding?
  - Parent response: *He is on breast milk, six ounce bottles every 4-5 hours*

How are you ensuring that you are supporting all children's families (e.g., language translations, interpreters) in order to gather this information?

To see a sample Infant Care Plan completed by a parent, refer to the additional resources provided for this class.

# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Toddler Care Plan

Sample questions provided to parents with their responses:

- What strategies and routines make you and your child most comfortable during the transition from home to center? How can we work together to support each other and your child at this time of day?
- Parent response: *She tends to need help separating right now. She is very clingy at drop off and cries when I leave. It breaks my heart and I have a hard time leaving knowing that she is crying. How can you help her with her emotions when I leave?*



# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

- How does your child like you to play with them?
  - Parent response: *She likes to pretend to make food with the kitchen toys, take care of her babies, likes to read books, loves to play in the dirt/sand outside*
- Is your child working on toilet learning? If so, what strategies do you use at home?
  - Parent response: *Not really, occasionally we will sit her on the toilet, but not regularly. We have noticed that she'll go hide behind the couch when she is going to the bathroom.*

How are you ensuring that you are supporting all families (e.g., language translations, interpreters) in order to gather this information?

To see a sample Toddler Care Plan completed by a parent, refer to the additional resources provided for this class.

# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Gathering Information — Why?

- Children thrive when their biological needs are met.
- Consistency between home and school can build security in a new environment.
- Having caregivers who are well-informed and prepared to respond to each child's unique needs can build trust quickly in a new relationship.
- Children have many new things to adjust to in group care. Consistent and familiar routines and responses will ease that adjustment time.
- Families are an invaluable source of information about their child. Partnering with them is crucial to providing high-quality care for young children.

## Gathering Information — When?

- Ideally, gathering information about a child's routine starts before their first day.
- It is important to have a sense of a child's needs before they start in your classroom.
- Infants and toddlers develop rapidly. Gathering information too far in advance of a child's first day could result in outdated or changed information.
- Be sure to check in with families regularly to get updates on any changes in their child's routine.
- With infants, it may be necessary to reach out to families each month for new information about their child's home routine.

# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Gathering Information — Who?

- Each child in your care should be assigned a primary caregiver, that is, one main person who will be caring for the child while in group care.
- Ideally, this primary caregiver will connect with the child's family.
- The primary caregiver should ask the child's family to invite input from anyone who cares for the child. This may include parents, grandparents, a nanny, or others.
- If the child's time is split between two households, it is important to connect with family members from both.
- The primary caregiver will share all pertinent details of the child's routine with the other classroom caregivers.



# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Gathering Information — What?

- There is much you will need to learn about children that will require you to develop relationships with them and their families.
- You may ask many more questions than this but you will need to know when their child eats or takes a bottle and sleeps for their specific routine.
- Understanding how children communicate biological needs such as hunger, thirst, or sleepiness can ensure that you are responsive and can make adjustments to the schedule as needed.
- It is helpful to learn how often a child has a bowel movement and if they have started potty training.
- Ask how a child likes to be held for eating or sleeping and if they eat and sleep independently or need support.
- You may also want to ask a family when their child is most playful or active and when they are most sleepy or restless. This will help you get a sense of what activities may be best at what times of day.
- To support separation anxiety, you may want to ask if the child has a comfort item (e.g., blanket, stuffed animal, toy).

# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Gathering Information — How?

It is important to first determine how families prefer to communicate.

- Consider various options for exchanging information: handwritten notes, email, in-person discussion, phone calls, home visits, a digital survey, or a remote video call.
- Providing many communication options will ensure that families can participate comfortably, ensuring you get the information that you need to create a responsive routine.
- For families whose primary language is not English, seek translation services to assist in exchanging this important information.

## Gathering Information — General Tips

- Ask questions genuinely and openly.
- Avoid passing judgment on child-rearing practices or home routines.
- Keep your tone, facial expression, and body language warm and respectful.
- Know your group care licensing requirements but don't expect families to follow them at home.
- Prepare families for a possible adjustment time in their child's eating and sleeping routines while their child is new to care.

# 1. Gather information about each child's day (continued)

## Ongoing Communication With Families About the Routine

- Be sure to check in regularly with families to gather information about their child's home routine.
- Make your classroom routine available to families.
  - Create a pictorial routine story to send home for parents to read to their children.
- Prepare families for upcoming developmental milestones.
- Discuss major changes to your classroom routine with families before they occur.
- Provide information about how you accommodate children as they grow and develop.



## 2. Enter each child’s information on a grid

- Enter all the information as times on a grid, using the elements of the day (e.g., arrival, departure, feeding or mealtime, naptime, choice time).

How are you respecting children’s home routines, individual needs, temperament, and biological rhythms?

**Sample Routine for an Individual Child**

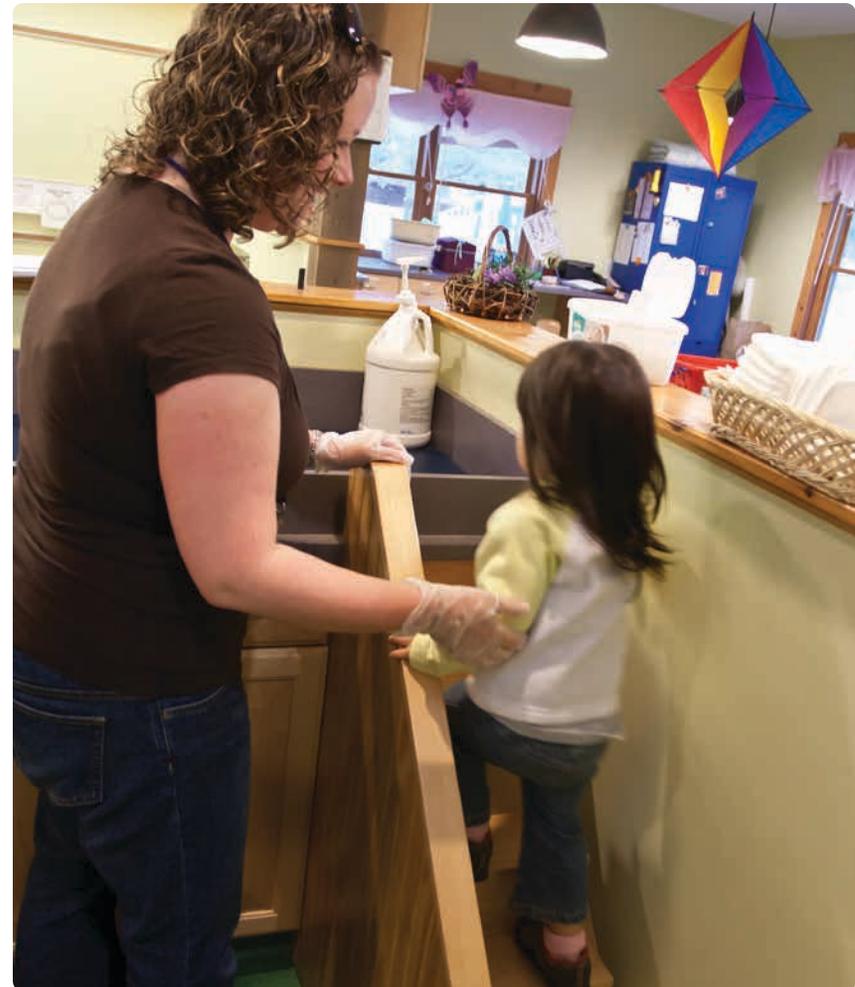
Dani is a young infant, two months old. She arrives around 7:30 a.m., takes a bottle shortly thereafter, then sleeps for about two hours. When she wakes up around 10:00 a.m., she takes a second bottle and stays awake for about two hours. At noon she is ready for another bottle followed by an hour or two of napping. When she wakes up, she likes to lie on the floor and stretch, wiggle, kick her legs, and wave her arms. Then she takes a final bottle before her Mom comes for her around 3:00 p.m.

Time	Dani
7:00 a.m.	
7:30 a.m.	Arrival
8:00 a.m.	Bottle
8:30 a.m.	Nap
9:00 a.m.	Nap
9:30 a.m.	Nap
10:00 a.m.	Bottle
10:30 a.m.	Watch S-Group
11:00 a.m.	Outside
11:30 a.m.	Choice
12:00 p.m.	Bottle
12:30 p.m.	Nap
1:00 p.m.	Nap
1:30 p.m.	Nap
2:00 p.m.	Nap
2:30 p.m.	Bottle
3:00 p.m.	Departure
3:30 p.m.	
4:00 p.m.	
4:30 p.m.	
5:00 p.m.	
5:45 p.m.	

## 2. Enter each child's information on a grid (continued)

### Creating Individual Routines

- For each child in your care, organize the routine information you received from their family by creating a chart with time increments on one margin.
- Review each child's day with the information families have provided.
- Are feedings the right length apart?
- Have you factored in enough time for naptime?
- Did you plan for how often diaper changes might occur?
- Have you captured all of the details families shared with you?



## 2. Enter each child's information on a grid (continued)

### Creating Individual Routines — Considerations

Review the routine and consider what other factors might require adjustments to the child's typical home day:

- Does the parent need to drop off at a time when the child typically naps at home?
- Does the child usually eat breakfast after their drop off time but breakfast is not served in your program?
- Does the toddler typically eat at 11:30 but the lunch service delivers at 12:00?
- Begin considering what adjustments you might need to make and how you can prepare the family for their child's transition.
- Additionally, notice where other events might occur for the child between caregiving tasks, such as group times or outside time.

### 3. Look for activities among children that occur around the same time

- Look over the filled-out schedules of all the children’s days.
- Based on this information, consider the following:
  - What patterns do you see emerging across all schedules?
  - When might it make sense to have choice time? Outside time?
  - When might it make sense to have a group time with materials for the older children?
  - When might it make sense to have a movement and music group time with all children who are awake?
  - How might you work out feeding and mealtimes when children end up eating at the same time?

**Sample Routines for Primary Caregiving Group of Children**

Time	Dani	Garth	Dustin	Grace
7:00 a.m.				Arrival
7:30 a.m.	Arrival			Breakfast
8:00 a.m.	Bottle			Choice
8:30 a.m.	Nap		Arrival	Choice
9:00 a.m.	Nap	Arrival	Choice	Choice
9:30 a.m.	Nap	W-Group: songs/Choice	W-Group: songs	W-Group: songs
10:00 a.m.	Bottle	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:30 a.m.	Watch S-Group	Nap	S-Group: materials	S-Group: materials
11:00 a.m.	Outside	Outside	Outside	Outside
11:30 a.m.	Choice	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00 p.m.	Bottle	Choice	Choice	Choice
12:30 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Choice	Nap
1:00 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Books on cot	Nap
1:30 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Nap	Nap
2:00 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Nap	Nap
2:30 p.m.	Bottle	Nap	Nap	Quiet activity
3:00 p.m.	Departure	Bottle	Snack	Snack
3:30 p.m.		W-Group: songs/Choice	W-Group: songs	W-Group: songs
4:00 p.m.		Outside	Outside	Outside
4:30 p.m.		Departure	Outside	Departure
5:00 p.m.			Books/Puzzles	
5:45 p.m.			Departure	

### 3. Look for activities among children that occur around the same time (continued)

#### Creating a Classroom Schedule

Once each child’s routine is charted, place all routines side by side.

- Identify when children will have similarities in their routine for caregiving tasks:
  - Eating
  - Sleeping
  - Diaper changes
- For each component of the daily routine, indicate the time that it will likely occur.
- Keep in mind that most daily routine components, if not all, will occur multiple times each day.

Sample Routines for Primary Caregiving Group of Children with Caregiving Routines Highlighted

Caregiving Routine	Bodily care as needed	Mealtimes	Naptime	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Dani</b>	<b>Garth</b>	<b>Dustin</b>	<b>Grace</b>
7:00 a.m.				Arrival
7:30 a.m.	Arrival			Breakfast
8:00 a.m.	Bottle			Choice
8:30 a.m.	Nap		Arrival	Choice
9:00 a.m.	Nap	Arrival	Choice	Choice
9:30 a.m.	Nap	W-Group: songs/Choice	W-Group: songs	W-Group: songs
10:00 a.m.	Bottle	Snack	Snack	Snack
10:30 a.m.	Watch S-Group	Nap	S-Group: materials	S-Group: materials
11:00 a.m.	Outside	Outside	Outside	Outside
11:30 a.m.	Choice	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:00 p.m.	Bottle	Choice	Choice	Choice
12:30 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Choice	Nap
1:00 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Books on cot	Nap
1:30 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Nap	Nap
2:00 p.m.	Nap	Nap	Nap	Nap
2:30 p.m.	Bottle	Nap	Nap	Quiet activity
3:00 p.m.	Departure	Bottle	Snack	Snack
3:30 p.m.		W-Group: songs/Choice	W-Group: songs	W-Group: songs
4:00 p.m.		Outside	Outside	Outside
4:30 p.m.		Departure	Outside	Departure
5:00 p.m.			Books/Puzzles	
5:45 p.m.			Departure	

### 3. Look for activities among children that occur around the same time (continued)

Now that caregiving routines have been identified, begin to notice when there are common gaps of time that can be used for:

- Choice time
- Outside time
- Group times for movement and music
- Group times with materials
- Give careful consideration to when children may be more tired or hungry and what experience might be easiest for them to engage in.





## 4. Create an overall sequence of events

- Write down what an overall daily schedule for these children might look like including arrival, departure, choice time, outside time, group time, feeding and mealtime, and naptime.
- If most children do not fit easily into one common routine, it is okay to have two different group routines (for example, in a mixed age classroom, an infant routine and a toddler routine)
- This should be posted for families in written form and pictorially for children.

### Creating a Classroom Schedule

Using the trends you've identified in your chart, you will now organize the information into a cohesive daily routine.

- List each part of the day and the approximate time it will occur.
- Recognize that timing will be somewhat flexible each day based on the children.

Take into consideration parts of the day that may be dictated by the entire program (e.g., time for shared playground/gym use or assigned times for meals to be delivered to the classroom).

## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Sample Routine Posted for Families and Staff

To see other samples of infant and toddler daily routines, reference this week's reading assignment.

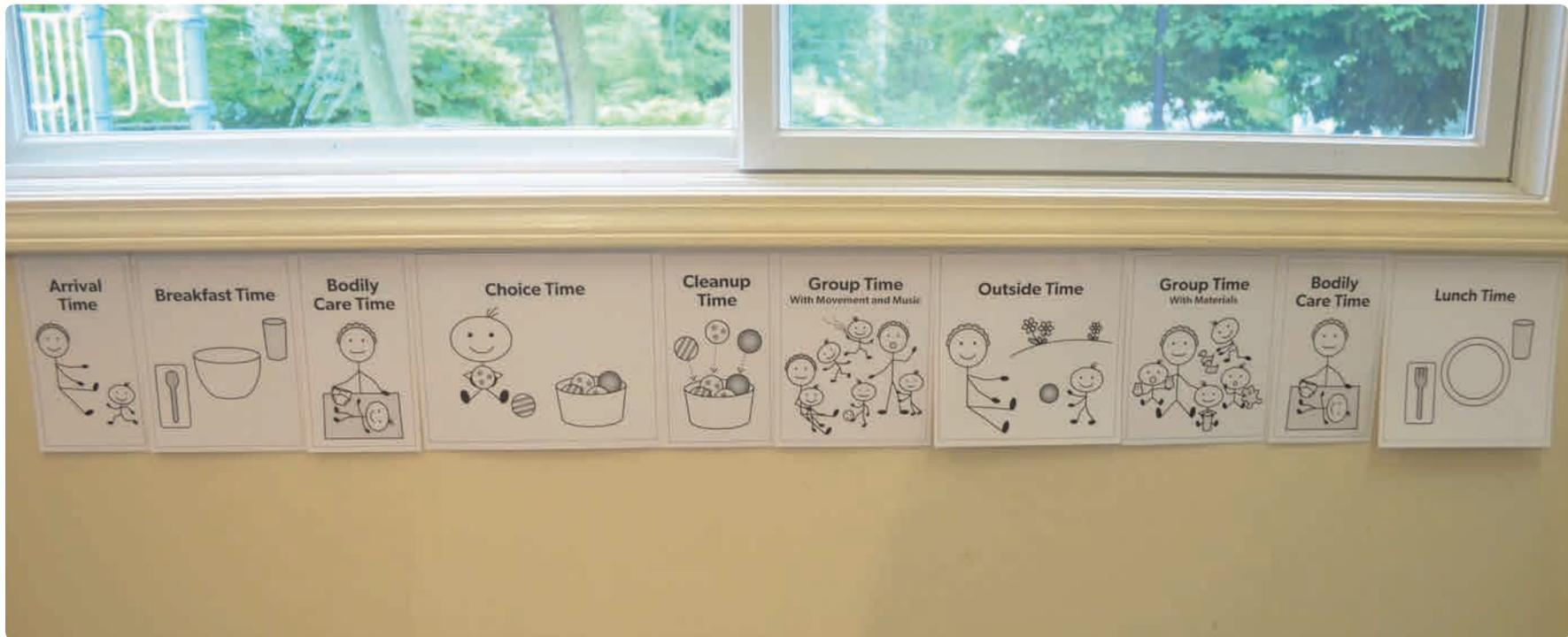
#### Daily Routine #2: General Toddler Schedule

Arrival/departure — staggered

7:30–8:00	Group time
8:00	Choice time
	Washroom/diapers
9:00	Snack
9:15	Dress for outside play and proceed to <b>outside time</b> .
10:15–10:30	Inside/undressing
10:30–11:30	Choice time
	Washroom/diapers
11:30–11:45	Whole group (movement and music)
11:45–12:15	Lunchtime
12:15–2:15	Naptime
2:15–2:30	Washroom/diapers
2:30–3:30	Dressing and outside time
3:30	Inside/undressing/snack
3:45	Group time
4:00–6:00	Choice time

## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Sample Routine Posted for Children



## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Tips for Once the Daily Schedule is Created

- Try out the schedule you've created and observe children to see if it truly meets their needs.
- Follow a consistent schedule but keep it flexible, particularly the length of each part of the day.
- Revisit the schedule often and make adjustments based on children's needs.
- Engage in regular communication with families to stay alert to changing home routines.



## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Adapting Routines as Children Grow

- Adults often describe children as “getting too big” for a classroom or being “ready” for the next classroom.
- The reality is children are constantly growing and developing.
- There is no age or birth date that perfectly “fits” a classroom or a magic day when children should transition to a new space.

The key is responsive teachers who continually pay attention to children’s development and make adaptations to the routine and environment to accommodate children’s growing needs. Teachers can use their anecdotal notes and COR Advantage data to support their decisions of when changes are needed.

## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Developing Infants

#### Observations:

Are increasingly more mobile and may even walk or climb on things.

Take a stronger interest in feeding themselves.

Begin noticing (and reaching for or crawling on) their peers.

Spend more time engaged in activities.

Express more verbally and non-verbally.

Stay awake longer without napping.

#### Strategies:

Incorporate more time in the day for gross-motor activities which may include more time outside or going to an available and safe gym or motor room.

Discuss with the family about adjusting their baby's nap schedule down to two or even just one nap each day.

Plan social group experiences like singing songs or exploring a treasure basket together.

For older infants eating table food, create a time for a shared meal experience at lunch and snack.

## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Developing Toddlers

#### Observations:

Are increasingly more physical and may climb on things in the classroom.

Have a longer attention span and engage in experiences for longer periods.

Express ideas and desires more frequently with words.

Insist on being independent and doing things themselves.

Seek out great challenges and more complex tasks.

#### Strategies:

Increase opportunities throughout the daily routine for more motor activities such as more time outside or regular time in a gym or gross- motor room.

Extend choice time to allow children more time to make choices and engage in the play they've selected.

Introduce planning and recall times to support children's intentional decision making and reflection.

Increase opportunities for children to be independent in tasks like putting their belongings away, setting up and cleaning up mealtimes, washing their hands and faces, and changing their clothes or getting ready to go outside.

Introduce more complex materials and experiences into group times.

## 4. Create an overall sequence of events (continued)

### Tips for Routines in Mixed Age Classrooms

- Revisit the routine often.
- Remember that one size does not fit all.
- Each year, your mixed-age class dynamics and routine will change.
- Remain flexible and child-focused.
- If you have an outlier (one older child or one younger child), avoid forcing their biological rhythms to fit the majority.
- Plan some experiences for the whole group but recognize that not all experiences are safe or developmentally appropriate for all ages.
- Expect that some children may align with one group for part of the day and another group for the remainder of the day.
- Consider how spaces in your environment will allow for children to engage in different things at different times (for example, some children playing while some children are sleeping).

# Summary — IT PQA: Section II. Schedules and Routines

## Item II-A. The overall daily schedule is predictable yet flexible (pages 26–29).

Row 1: The day is organized around regular daily events and caregiving routines.

Row 2: There is a posted schedule for families and a pictorial routine posted low for older infants and toddlers to see.

Row 3: Teachers refer children to and talk about the routine throughout the day.

Row 4: The daily schedule flexes throughout the day to accommodate each child's individual needs, rhythms, and temperament.

Row 5: Throughout the day children initiate and freely explore actions, materials, and other people.



# A peek ahead:

## Next week, you will explore:

- Introducing planning and recall times with older toddlers.
- Implementing concrete strategies and props during planning and recall times.

