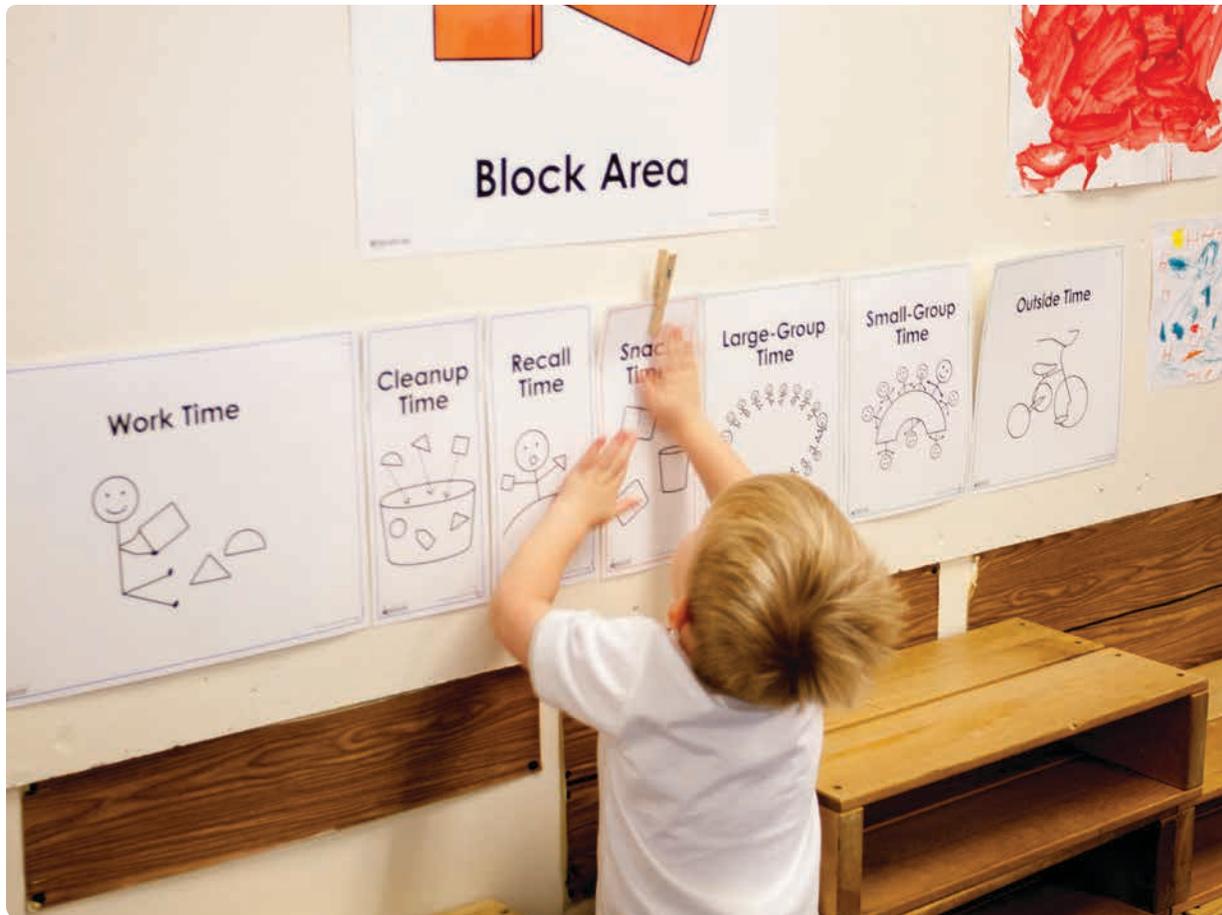


Week 1 Reading Assignment

The Importance of a Daily Routine



The Importance of a Daily Routine

Imagine this...

Your typical weekday morning routine involves you waking at 6:00 am for a 45-minute walk. You return home for a cup of coffee before jumping in the shower by 7:00 am. You get dressed and eat breakfast by 7:30, pack your lunch and are on your way to work by 7:45 am — just in time to hear your favorite news segment on the radio.

This week, however, an old friend is staying with you. On Monday morning, when you return from your walk, your friend is in the bathroom. At 6:55 am, you hear the shower start. Choosing to switch up your morning routine, you look in the refrigerator and discover the yogurt you were hoping to eat for breakfast is gone, as if the fruit you were planning to pack in your lunch. You are finally able to hop

in the shower at 7:30 am, get dressed and leave for work, albeit 25 minutes behind schedule. But, once you walk out to the driveway, you realize your guest's car is parked behind your own, blocking your way out.

Although you are excited about your friend being in town, this morning, as you are nearly 30 minutes late for work, you are feeling completely out of sorts.

Routines allow us to be organized and efficient; they give us a sense of control. When we follow a routine, we are less likely to forget things or make careless errors. Routines are also comforting. We want to know what to expect and worry less about undesirable “surprises.” Children need routines for the same reasons adults do, especially since so many daily events are beyond their control.

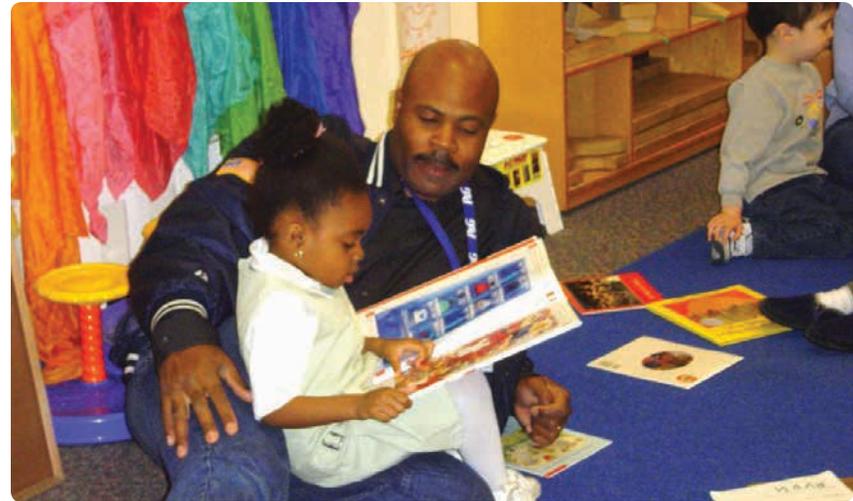
The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

Let's return to our "Imagine This" scenario...

It's 8:25 am when you walk into work. Your children begin arriving at 8:30. Fortunately, your co-teacher Maria has already begun preparing for the day.

At 8:30, Josiah enters his preschool classroom. He takes off his backpack, coat, and mittens, throwing them on the ground, kisses his mom goodbye and runs off to play. Throughout choice time, he moves between activities, seemingly without a plan.

It's 9:25, Maria, looks around the classroom and notices children running. She thinks, "We need something calming. Now might be a good time to read a book aloud."



When Maria begins reading his favorite book aloud, Josiah wanders over and listens to a page. Then, he shifts back to the block area, where other children are building. He looks longingly out of the classroom window and begins to cry; Josiah is ready to go home.

The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

By 9:40, Josiah is still crying and other children have begun running again — you take a deep breath as you realize the morning has already spiraled out of your control. In an effort to pull the day back together, you announce, “Time to clean up and move to the rug for large-group time.” Josiah starts to scream, another child begins to cry, and many more children continue to run and play. They simply are not ready — yesterday, choice time lasted for 90 minutes; today, it was only 40 minutes in length.

Consistent daily routines are emotionally supportive of young children. Like us, children feel more confident and secure when their routine is both

familiar and predictable (The Office of Head Start, 2020). When children can anticipate the order and content of their day, they feel both reassured and empowered. Additionally, consistent daily routines help children build executive functioning skills, including the ability to self-regulate, and engage more deeply in their learning (Rosanbalm & Murray, 2017). In the scenario described above, Josiah’s inconsistent routine left him feeling emotional, insecure, and longing to go home. Even the child-initiated part of the day (choice time) was without a purposeful plan. This created aimless movement from one activity to the next without intention.

The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

In HighScope programs, a predictable sequence of events offers the following benefits for children and adults:

Creates a sense of security and control. Research shows children benefit from predictable relationships and environments, giving them an understanding of how a caregiver might respond in a specific situation, as well as the knowledge that events will occur in practicable patterns (Bocknek, 2020). A consistent routine means children know what to expect each day. Predictability helps establish clear goals for behavioral expectations within the daily routine, supporting the development of children's ability to control their own emotions and behaviors (Rosenbaum & Murray,

2017). In a HighScope classroom, if there are changes to the routine children know they will be told ahead of time what they are and why they are taking place, giving them the opportunity to prepare for these exceptions to the rule.

Consistency is especially important for children whose families may be experiencing high levels of stress or adversity. When early childhood educators develop consistent daily routines, they simultaneously reduce feelings of insecurity and challenging behaviors (Rosenbaum & Murray, 2017). Consistent routines and a knowledge of expectations lay the foundation for young children to feel safe, secure, and ready to learn (CASEL, 2022).

The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

Supports initiative. Although the HighScope daily routine defines the type of activity in each segment of the day, it does not dictate or limit what children can do during that time. Within this set framework, children know they will have choices. Routines are balanced with child-initiated and adult-initiated times during the day. Routines providing opportunities for children to direct their own actions, make their own choices, and identify their own interests foster the development of executive function skills (Center for the Developing Child, 2022). In a HighScope classroom, these opportunities are the most obvious during plan-do-review, when children carry out their intentions. However, even during adult-initiated group times, children have choices and follow their individual interests at their own developmental levels.



The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

Allows for flexibility. Daily routines in a HighScope classroom should be designed to provide consistency and predictability with enough flexibility so that children feel neither rushed nor slowed down in carrying out their activities. Building flexible routines also allows for teachers to capitalize on spontaneous teaching opportunities, such as those that develop in the moment from children's interests and engagement (Epstein, 2014). Elements of the daily routine may overlap on occasion, allowing children who need more time to complete the previous activity the availability to do so. For example, a few children may still be finishing up eating their snack with one teacher while another teacher and a group of children begin to engage in large-group time. This flexibility allows for smoother transition while simultaneously continuing to provide children with the sense of security and control they expect from the routine (Epstein, 2014).

Provides a social community. When people do the same thing at the same time, it creates a bond between them. Even though children pursue the same activity in individual ways, they are still sharing a common experience. As an example, think of eating at a restaurant with family or friends. People often order different dishes from the menu, but they may sample one another's choices and discover something new they like. Conversations sometimes involve the whole group, and at other times pairs and small groups. While each person's dining experience is somewhat different, everyone shares the sense of adventure and togetherness.

The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

In a HighScope classroom, the daily routine offers varied opportunities for learning and social experiences. The daily routine includes:

- **Large-group times** are the components of the daily routine when the entire classroom is engaged in an experience together. This happens during large group time but may also occur at other times of day including greeting time, nap or rest time, and some transition times, such as cleanup time.
- **Small-group times** are experiences that involve the whole class but are carried out with smaller groups of children. These include small-group time, planning time, recall time, read-aloud time, and meal or snacktimes.
- **Opportunities for children to work alone, in pairs, OR in self-selected groups** happen primarily during work time, when children carry out their plans. This also occurs during outside time.

HighScope Preschool Daily Routine* Components

Greeting time/message board (5–10 minutes)
 Planning time (10–15 minutes)
 Work time (45–60 minutes)
 Cleanup time (10 minutes)
 Recall time (10–15 minutes)
 Large-group time (10–15 minutes)
 Small-group time (15–20 minutes)
 Outside time (30–40 minutes)
 Read-Aloud time (10–15 minutes)
 Transition times, including arrival and departure (variable)
 Eating and resting times (variable)

*The order of components may vary, depending on the hours and structure of the program. However, planning time, work time, cleanup time, and recall time always occur in that order. In half-day programs, each component typically happens once. In full-day programs, one or more components may be repeated.

The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

Throughout this course, you will be provided a broad overview of each of the elements of the HighScope preschool daily routine. Reflect on the rich variety of experiences and consider how HighScope teachers find a balance of adult-facilitated and child-led times of day, or shared control. Know that HighScope teachers may need to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct their own routine to find one that fits with their current group of children. Strive to find a comfortable, supportive consistent framework that is designed with enough flexibility to empower children as they make choices about how and when transitions within their routine occur.

Adapted from:

Epstein, A. (2021). Chapter Seven: What is the HighScope Daily Routine? *Essentials of active learning in preschool* (pp. 49–51). Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Press.

Additional Resources:

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (CASEL). *A supportive classroom environment; belonging and emotional safety*. <https://schoolguide.casel.org/focus-area-3/classroom/a-supportive-classroom-environment/>

Center for the Developing Child. (2022). *Key concepts. Executive function & self-regulation*. Harvard University. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function>

The Importance of a Daily Routine (continued)

Bockneck, E. (2020, March 31). *The importance of routines for kids*. zerotothrive.org

Epstein, A. (2014). *The intentional teacher: Choosing the best strategies for young children's learning*. Ypsilanti, MI: National Association for the Education of Young Children and HighScope Press.

Rosanbalm, K.D., & Murray, D.W. (2017). *Promoting self-regulation in early childhood: A practice brief* (OPRE Brief #2017-79). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Office of Head Start. (2020, July 13). *The importance of schedules and routines*. ECLKC. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/importance-schedules-routines#:~:text=Just%20like%20adults%2C%20children%20feel,in%20control%20of%20their%20environment>

CAST. (2018). *Universal design for learning guidelines*. <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Lesperance, M. (2021). Timing is everything: Understanding the timing, length, and sequence of activities. *Teaching Young Children*, 14(4).