

Establishing Daily Routines

Constructing Daily Activity Schedules

A *daily activity schedule* is a written list, developed by the teacher, outlining the basic routine of the children on any given day and at any given time.

Appropriate Daily Activity Schedules

- Are developed according to the: kind of setting, type of daily program, length of the daily program
- Correspond to the developmental level of the children in the classroom
- List the activities of the children, not the teacher
- Are basic and brief
- List times for each activity
- Illustrate a consistent routine
- Are posted in visitors' view—inside and outside the classroom

What Should Be Included?—Four Basic Routines

1. Teacher-Directed Whole-Group Activities

- More appropriate for 4-year-olds and up
- Children under 3 may be involved in short whole-group activities, but should be able to leave, if desired.
- Timing Rule: 2 x child's age = maximum minutes in group
- Several whole-group activity periods preferred over long frames of activities in sequence
- Activities may include stories, songs, fingerplays, discussions, weather, calendar, etc.
- Appropriate times are when children are well-rested and nourished (Example: mid-morning)

2. Self-Selected Activities (Center Time/Free Play/Exploration, Etc.)

- Longer than whole-group (one hour or more)
- Scheduled time should allow children time to become engaged in activity before stopping (prevents fragmentation)
- Children should be allowed to change from one activity to another if there is space in the area of interest
- Infant schedule should allow time for center play

3. Small-Group and Individual Activities

- Small-group activity periods may be scheduled for 10–15 minutes
- Four to six children with similar interests and abilities are grouped
- The teacher(s) work(s) with each group to teach specific concepts
- Infant schedule should include *developmental play* for skill-building

4. A Balance of Active and Quiet Activities

- Indoors and outdoors (depending on the weather)
- Daily routines
- Meals, snacks, quiet period, hand washing, tooth brushing, toileting (some teacher-initiated, some child-initiated)
- Self-help skills should be ongoing and woven throughout the day

Sub Schedules

It is a good practice for each classroom teacher to organize a Sub Folder containing a "Sub Schedule" for a substitute teacher. The sub schedule is more descriptive than the regular daily activity schedule, including detailed information about transitions, routines (Examples: hand washing, toileting), and other procedures. Having a sub schedule available allows the day to run more smoothly, which makes the children feel more secure and emotionally stable when the regular teacher is absent.

Ideal Daily Activity Schedules

Infants (6 Weeks–12 Months)	Toddlers (1–2 Years)
6:00–8:00 Arrivals, Health Checks, Exploration*	6:00–8:00 Arrivals, Health Checks, Exploration*
8:00–8:30 Prep for Breakfast, Breakfast, Hand Washing	8:00–8:30 Prep for Breakfast, Breakfast, Hand Washing
8:30–8:45 Opening Activities/Story Time	8:30–8:45 Opening Activities
8:45–9:45 Exploration*/Developmental Play	8:45–9:45 Outdoor Play
9:45–10:15 Outdoor Play	9:45–10:15 Hand Washing, Developmental Play (Young Toddlers), Small-group Activities (Older Toddlers)
10:15–10:30 Hand Washing, Music Activity	10:15–11:15 Exploration*
10:30–11:30 Exploration*/Developmental Play	11:15–11:30 Cleanup, Music & Movement
11:30–12:30 Prep for Lunch, Lunch, Hand Washing	11:30–12:15 Prep for Lunch, Lunch, Hand Washing, Cleanup
12:30–12:45 Story Time	12:15–12:30 Story Time
12:45–2:15 Quiet Time	12:30–2:00 Quiet Time
2:15–2:45 Outdoor Play	2:00–2:30 Outdoor Play
2:45–3:00 Hand Washing, Music Activity	2:30–2:45 Hand Washing, Music & Movement
3:00–6:00 Extended Day—Snack, Exploration*, Outdoor Play	2:45–3:00 Closing Activities
<hr/> <p>*During Exploration, infants engage in self-selected activities—Gross & Fine Motor Play, Nature/Science, Music & Movement, Dramatic Play, and Soft & Cozy Book Area.</p> <p>Individualized Schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Each infant is fed according to his/her individual feeding plan. ✓ Diaper checks are performed every 2 hours and other times as needed. ✓ Each infant is allowed to sleep according to his/her individual sleeping pattern. ✓ Hand washing is performed upon arrival, before and after meals, after diapering/toileting, after outdoor play, after handling pets, after sensory play, after creative art activities, after sneezing, and other times as needed. 	<hr/> <p>*During Exploration, toddlers engage in self-selected activities—Dramatic Play, Nature/Science, Creative Art, Sensory Play, Music & Movement, Table Toys, Gross Motor Play, Soft & Cozy Book Area, and Block Play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Diaper checks and toileting are performed every 2 hours and other times as needed. ✓ Hand washing is performed upon arrival, before and after meals, after diapering/toileting, after outdoor play, after handling pets, after sensory play, after creative art activities, after sneezing, and other times as needed.

Teacher’s Tip: Create your Ideal Daily Activity Schedule (WINGS Book of Forms).