

The Power of Routines: Guide for Training Child Care providers

Overview:

The *Using the Power of Routines* materials contain information on why routines are so important for toddlers, how to create a successful routine, and, when necessary, how to change an existing routine. Using routines can help to alleviate some of the frustrations that come with caring for a toddler.

Materials:

- ◊ Video: The Power of Routines
- ◊ Provider Handout (Single-sided)
- ◊ Parent Handout (Double-sided, see page 2)

To access the materials, visit

Website: <http://lactation.ucdavis.edu/baby-behavior-in-child-care/>

Password: BBCC2017

**Demystifying Routines:
Helping parents start or change routines**

What is a Routine?

A routine is an activity that is done in the same order or says one over. What I mean routines is our daily lives. For example, what you make in the morning you eat in the morning, eat the other, feed the dog, and do the same thing every day. A routine is also a schedule. A schedule is like 2 during the order of the day. For example, if you have a routine to leave the house at 6:00 am because you're leaving at 6:30 am.

Why are routines important for toddlers?

Because toddlers need to know about the world around them. They remember the routines in their lives. These routines become habits. Like eating breakfast, it's the same. When a routine begins, the routine goes into the child's mind. It's like a movie playing in their head. If a routine begins, they will think about what comes after or later. As a grown person, we get used to routines. And we like routines. We like routines because it makes us feel safe. It's like a comfort zone. So routines are good for toddlers.

How can I help parents start or change routines?

Toddlers are the most difficult age because they don't understand changes in their routines. It's just natural for them to want to do things the way they always did. Here are some tips for parents to consider by doing:

- Describing routines you have with your child and what you expect when things don't happen according to the routine (like dinner time).
- Showing the ways you adjust routines and let it take time for the child to adjust their expectations.
- Reminding parents that to start a new routine, they should choose the steps that go together in the same order each time to help the child remember what to do. It's like learning a new song.
- Not jumping from one thing to another. The key is to stick with one thing for a long time. When there's a new song, parents can sing it and continue to sing it until the child gets used to it.

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Tips for sharing with childcare providers

- ◊ Begin by asking the provider what they believe parents think of when they hear the word "routine." Discuss some of the routines that the provider implements in the daycare's daily activities, highlighting the difference between a routine and a schedule.
- ◊ Share video and Provider Handout with the provider. Talk about the tips and concepts in the materials that might be most useful to the parents of the children that they care for.
- ◊ Offer copies of the Parent Handout for the provider to share with parents. Point out the tips that are given to make caring for toddlers easier.
- ◊ Help provider identify specific opportunities that they have to share messages with the parents of the children that they care for, such as pick up and drop off times when updating parents on the activities of the day, in newsletters or calendars, or when parents ask questions.

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Using the Power of Routines

What is a routine?

- A routine is an activity that is done with steady in the same order – or way over and over.
- A routine is NOT a schedule. It is like a dance – the order of the steps is what is important, not the time of day.
- To make a routine easier, we have routines for things we do each day, like getting ready in the morning or preparing “go” for bed. So sometimes we have routines without even realizing it.



Toddlers memorize routines in their lives.

- Your toddler works hard to learn everything about the world around him. He watches people and memorizes what he sees when things happen.
- Your toddler makes “scripts” in his mind based on the routines he remembers. It is scripts as little as movie scripts with one scene following the next. He uses these scripts to predict what will happen next. Knowing what to expect helps him feel safe and secure.
- When things do “happen the way he expects, he may get frustrated or upset. He’s not trying to be difficult; it’s just how his brain works.

You are in charge of the scripts your toddler makes.

You can influence the scripts your toddler creates by introducing routines for him to memorize. Routines work for many daily activities, including getting ready in the morning, meal-times, or bed time; getting in the car seat, and bath time. The routines don’t have to be complicated; they can include the tasks you do everyday. To make a routine:

1. Choose a few steps for your routine. Keep it simple!
2. Do the same steps in the same order over and over.
3. Allow time for your baby to memorize the new routine.

Creating and Changing Routines

Main Ideas to Point Out

- Routines are NOT schedules - Routines are activities with steps done in the same order over and over
 - Routines are great for daily activities
 - Toddlers memorize “scripts” to help them learn. Knowing what to expect next helps toddlers feel safe and secure
 - Toddlers get upset less often when they know what to expect
 - Caregivers are in control of the scripts your toddler creates
 - When creating a routine, keep it simple and consistent
 - Do the same steps in the same order over and over
 - When changing a routine, start with a completely new first step, then repeat the routine over and over
 - Allow time (up to 2 weeks) for toddlers to learn a new routine
 - Create routines that work best for everyone

Ideas for Sharing Opportunities

- Providers can share the routines they have in their own daycare with parents
 - Great sharing opportunities occur during drop off and pick up times when a routine can help alleviate the stress of the transition
 - Weaning and potty training are great opportunities to talk about how to change routines
 - When changing a routine at daycare, you can share with parents how they can replicate the process at home