


# 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.

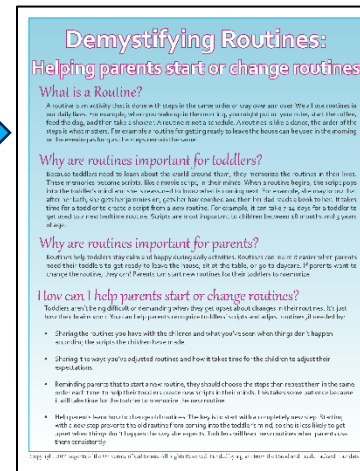
## Materials:

- ◇ 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



## 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 little or no change 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 our lives easier, we have routines for things we do each day, like getting ready in the morning or preparing for bed. Sometimes we have routines without even realizing it.

**Toddlers memorize routines in their lives.**

- Your toddler will be hard to learn everything about the world around him. He watches people and memorizes how and when things happen.
- Your toddler makes "scripts" in his mind based on the routines he remembers. His scripts are like 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 don't 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, meals, nap 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 already do. 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.

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## Main Ideas to Point Out

- Routines are NOT schedules - Routines are activities with steps done in the same order or way 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

## Creating and Changing Routines

**Creating a new routine**

You can use routines to help your toddler feel calm and happy. For example, many toddlers cry when getting out into their car seats. If you notice your toddler getting upset when put in his car seat, you could start using a simple routine to help him with the transition of moving from the house or daycare to the car. It doesn't have to be complicated; it just needs to be consistent. He won't get as upset when he knows what to expect. Here are some simple steps you could include in your car seat routine:

1. Help your toddler get his jacket and diaper bag
2. Turn off the lights in the house
3. Walk to the car together while singing a specific song
4. Put the toddler in the car seat

As he goes through these same steps over and over, he'll create a script, learning that the stress ends with him going into his car seat.

**Changing an existing routine**

You can change existing routines that aren't working for you anymore. When you need to change an existing routine, the key is to start with a completely new step. Starting in a completely new way will leave the original script from popping into your toddler's mind. Weaving from the bottle is a good example of when to use a change in routine to help your toddler make a big change. When he sees you start the process of making the bottle, he expects that he'll get the bottle at the end of the routine. The trick about the steps you take when making your toddler a bottle. Change the first step completely and then change the rest of the routine and you'll give him a cue instead of a bottle. Here are some ways you can change the routine:

1. Set up the cups in a different location than the bottles
2. Get the milk out of the refrigerator getting the script set
3. Pour the milk into the cups in a different location in the kitchen
4. Change the location where he drinks from his cup, like moving the location of his high chair or asking him to sit in a different chair at the table.

After he gets used to the new routine, he'll no longer expect the bottle and will be more likely to take the cup without getting upset.

**You know your baby best, so you can develop routines that work best for you both!**

## 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, a you can share with parents how they can replicate the process at home
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