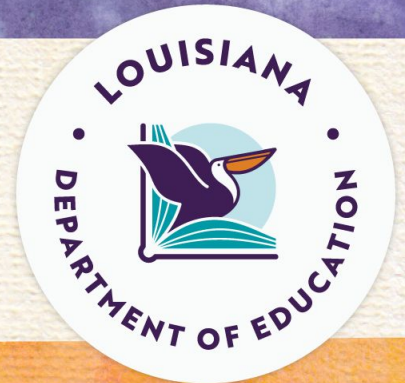EARLY CHILDHOOD
CONFERENCE 2024
SHAPING LOUISIANA'S FUTURE

Developing Infant Schedules and
Supporting Routines

LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose:

Participants will learn the rationale and strategies for using a schedule to develop respectful routines that support "on demand care" and facilitate learning and child development.

Objectives:

During this session, participants will:

- Define characteristics of daily schedules and routines
- Explore the embedded learning opportunities within the daily schedules and routines of infants and toddlers
- Gain understanding of respectful routines and schedules best practices

Agenda

Activity 1: Respectful Routines

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As the opening activity, participants will view a video on how developing relationships through respectful routines can be used to facilitate learning opportunities.

[Respectful Routines](#)

During typical respectful routines, teachers can identify a child's strengths and needs and embed learning and practice of skills.

What were some things that you saw in the video that can be used to support a child's development and understanding?

Developing Caregiving Routines

Caregiving Routines

Caregiving routines are the steps needed to complete each part of a schedule that include

- Arrival and departure
- Feeding (or meals and snacks)
- Diapering (toileting)
- Dressing
- Napping

However, routine care is far from routine. Each infant's and toddler's routine care should be based on their readiness and need for feeding, diapering, toilet training, and sleeping.

During routine care, the child should have the teacher's undivided attention as the teacher focuses on meeting the child's needs and getting to know them.

Caregiving Routines - Partner With Families

Children feel more comfortable and secure when their daily activities are predictable and familiar. It is important to gain feedback from families on their child's preferences.

- Keep things simple.
  - Ask the family about the things that they do every day with the child.
    - This will help establish the child's routine in the classroom and reduce challenging behaviors.
- Provide positive, descriptive feedback to families when children attempt to follow or succeed in establishing a new routine based on their evolving and growing developmental needs in the classroom.

Caregiving Routines - Partner With Families

Ways to encourage family engagement in the responsive caregiving of infants and toddlers include

- Providing opportunities for families to be involved in regular communication of classroom activities
  - Encouraging families to volunteer and spend time in the classroom playing and learning with their infant or toddler
- Establishing regular parent meetings to discuss potential changes to the child's schedule and routine based on developmental progress observed by both the parent and teacher

The Importance of Schedules and Routines. (2024). ECLKC. https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/quienes-somos/articulo/importance-schedules-routines

The Daily Schedule

The Daily Schedule

In the early childhood classroom, schedules represent the big picture and includes main activities that happen each day in the classroom. Schedules are meant for the teacher to

- Support continuity of care in group childcare settings
- Provide a framework for planning and good use of time spent with children
- Provide families with an understanding of what their children are doing during the day

However, in group settings of child care, **flexibility** if just as important. This means that schedules should be modified to accommodate "on demand" care, as needed, for young children to ensure that their needs are consistently met.

The Daily Schedule - Infants

Infants follow individualized schedules for sleeping, eating, diapering, and playing. From birth to around 6 months of age, a one-size-fits-all schedule would not be appropriate.

- Infant teachers may have as many routines as children. Therefore, managing these individual schedules will require planning
- Infant teachers should take steps to prepare and anticipate the needs of infants in advance

For example: At any time in the classroom, the teacher may have one infant napping, another receiving their bottle, and a third playing with a soft toy. The teacher needs to be able to juggle responsibilities to align with all infant needs.

The Daily Schedule - Infants

Time	Micheal	Thomas	Krystal
9:00	Arrival; already ate; wash hands; free play	Arrival; goodbye kiss to dad; wash hands; eat breakfast	Arrival; ate at home; wash hands; free play
9:30	Nap	Free Play	Free play then bottle
10:00	Diaper check/change; free play	Nap	Nap
10:30	Free play	Diaper check/change;	Diaper check/change
11:00	Tummy Time/free play	Bottle/ Free Play	Tummy Time
12:00	Diaper check/ Change; Bottle;Nap	Free play; Nap	Bottle/ Nap

The Daily Schedule - Infants

7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.	Arrival, greeting, feeding and diapering of children	1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.	Diapering, feeding, music and movement time
8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	Morning Nap	1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Child initiative activities: Exploring materials and objects
9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	Diapering; Quiet and active floor time; outside play time	3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Diapering; reading and exploring books; naps
10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	Feeding; diapering; reading and exploring books	3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.	Movement and free play
11:30 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Naps	5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Diapering and prepare for departure

The Daily Schedule - Toddlers

Toddlers' schedules in group care can transition into more consistent and group-centered activities

- Visual schedules with photos or drawings support understanding of daily events and routines
- Re-teaching and reminding children of common group activities often by modeling steps and allowing children to practice them

For Example: Toddlers may eat meals together, go outside together, take naps together, and come together for a short time in small groups for stories, music, or movement experiences. However, even with these group activities, ensure that children have choices to ensure that they can take the initiative through choices in their own learning and receive individualized care.

The Daily Schedule - Toddlers

6:00 – 7:30 Arrival/ Routine Care*/Child Initiated Activities

7:30 – 8:30 BREAKFAST/Hand-washing/Tooth-brushing/ Clean – up

8:30 – 8:45 Planned Activities (Music & Movement/Art/ Story Time/Other)

8:45 – 10:00 Self-selected Activities/45 minutes Outside Time/Gross Motor Play

10:00 – 11:00 Small-group Activities (i.e. art, story times, etc.)/Planned Activities

11:00 – 11:30 Self-selected Activities/Clean-up/Prep for Lunch (hand-washing, etc)

11:30 – 12:15 LUNCH/Routine Care*

12:15 – 12:45 Transition Activities/Story Time/Prep for nap

12:45 – 3:00 NAP TIME

2:15 – 3:15 SNACK/Routine Care*

3:15 – 3:45 Planned Activities

3:45 – 5:00 Self-selected Activities/45 minutes Outside Time/Gross Motor Play

5:00 – 6:00 Quiet Activities/ Routine Care*/ Departure

The Daily Schedule - Opportunities For Responsive Caregiving and Caring Relationships

The caregiving environment should support continuity of care for each child that reinforces the formation of strong, positive relationships between the child and teacher.

For Example: When a teacher reads, and responds to, an infant's message that they are hungry, the sensitivity shown by the teacher helps the child understand that "I am someone who is paid attention to". This simple exchange in the classroom supports the child's sense of security and encourages further positive interactions the promote development and learning.

Activity 2: Responsive Routines for Infants & Toddlers

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Watch this video and identify how these caregivers support infants and toddlers in their daily routines.

[Responsive Caregiving Routines With Infants and Toddlers](#)

Schedules and Routines - Embedded Learning Opportunities

Schedules and Routines - Embedded Learning Opportunities

Embedded learning opportunities are short interactions within classroom routines that teach, important everyday skills to children.

- Especially for infants and toddlers, these interactions occur during daily activities and routines
  - Learn functional skills
  - Provide motivation by taking advantage of the child's interest

Schedules and Routines - Embedded Learning Opportunities

Daily schedules support embedded learning opportunities

- Balanced between quiet and active periods of the day to avoid overstimulation and agitation
- Flexible and individualized to meet the needs of the infant

Schedules and Routines - Embedded Learning Opportunities

- Develop opportunities for group and individual activities, which are age appropriate
- Plan activities to allow sufficient time at the child's pace for individualized attention to be given to each child

Schedules and Routines - Embedded Learning Opportunities - Activities

Embedded learning opportunities are within activities and transitions for infants and toddlers.

Examples of these activities include

- Diapering
- Feeding or meal times
- Washing hands
- Active or play time
- Preparing for pick-up time

Schedules and Routines - Embedded Learning Opportunities - Planning

Define the learning objective for each child

- Identify the activities within the child's schedule where the new skill can be taught
- Plan ahead for the time and the environment that will initiate the new skill learning

Activity 2 - Schedules and Routines Encourage High-Quality Interactions

Schedules and Routines Encourage High-Quality Interactions

In the following video, observe how the teacher uses high-quality interactions during schedules and routines to encourage responsive caregiving and promote cognitive development.

Supporting Cognitive Development: Interactions

Classroom Routine Best Practices

Classroom Routine Best Practices - Responsive Caregiving

Classroom routines ensure that teachers provide responsive caregiving and provide high-quality classroom interactions that encourage an infant's comfort.

Routines should be consistent but flexible to meet individual needs within group care to promote

- Relational Climate
- Teacher Sensitivity
- Facilitated Exploration
- Early Language Support

Classroom Routine Best Practices - Greetings

When the parent and child enter the room at drop-off times, greet both with

- Eye contact
- A facial expression of openness
- A smile
- Communicate with the parent and child upon entry to demonstrate that their presence is valued and respected

Best Practices In Routines - Diapering

Before you bring the child to the changing table make sure you have done the following steps:

- Speak to the child and let them know that it is time for a diaper change
- Self-talk through the process demonstrates sensitivity and regard for the child

These simple actions will build trust between the caregiver and infant.

Best Practices In Routines - Feeding

Before you bring the child to the high chair or prepare for feeding make sure you have done the following steps:

- Speak to the child and let them know that it is time to eat
- Self-talk through the process to ensure sensitivity and regard for the child is shown

Best Practices In Routines - Napping

Napping routines should be in the same order and place (if possible) for each and every nap.

- **Environment:** Keep the space quiet, cool, and dark, with few distractions
- **Consistency:** Stick to the same order of activities to maintain the routine
- **Comfort:** Make sure the child has a comfortable, safe place to sleep
- **Sleep cues:** Use a consistent verbal cue, like a sleep phrase, to signal that it's time for sleep

Conclusion

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- Be consistent and flexible, schedules change as children do and be mindful of each individual changes
  - Pay attention to all children's individual needs
  - Have a system in place to ensure all children needs are met with "on demand care"
- Be intentional with routine planning to be respectful of all children in care and their individually embedded learning opportunities
- Use classroom best practices to ensure that all children receive appropriate quality of care that encourages and motivates learning
- Classroom routines and schedules support the development of children's development of self and belonging

Brandi Crowell M. ED

Early Childhood Strategy Communications Specialist

Louisiana Department of Education

Bridget Rey, Ph.D.
Education Program Consultant
Louisiana Department of Education
Early Childhood Strategy

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