



## Creating Routines



The beginning of a new school year and the arrival of fall remind us of the importance of routines. While we always enjoy a break from the “same-old, same-old,” getting back into the familiar routines of fall creates stability and a sense of the familiar. For young children especially, those familiar routines are important to their overall healthy social and emotional development.

### Tips for establishing and enforcing routines

- Create visual reminders or a picture schedule for a typical day.
- Plan structured activity periods; e.g., right after a nap, play a game.
- Break routines into steps; e.g., getting ready for bed (bath, pajamas, brushing teeth, story time, singing).
- Prepare the child for transitions from one activity to the next (“In 10 minutes, we will ...”).
- Develop regular routines for daily activities, such as meals, bed time, story time, quiet time.
- Be flexible and creative; try not to be rigid and unable to adjust to unusual circumstances.

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## Routines Help Children

- Make sense of the world and learn how the world is organized.
- Feel secure and safe when many things in their environment, including themselves, are constantly changing.
- Develop their ability to regulate their own emotions and behavior.
- Learn skills and internalize habits through repetition.
- Learn self-discipline and develop personal responsibility.
- Set their internal body clocks (e.g., by eating meals and going to bed at the same time every day).
- Have a sense of independence and autonomy when much of what happens is out of their control.
- Engage in fewer power struggles, arguments, and conflicts with parents and caregivers.
- Develop confidence and self-esteem as the various tasks are mastered .
- Anticipate and look forward to what comes next.
- Have continuity, consistency, and predictability in their lives—all very important in a world where much is unpredictable.

## R E S O U R C E S

*Structure: Why Kids Need Routines* by Laura Markham.

<http://bit.ly/2mCGwqj>

**Creating Routines for Love and Learning.** Zero to Three.

<http://bit.ly/2kwc7Jo>

*Transitions with Young Children.* Pennsylvania's Promise for Children.

<http://bit.ly/2kFFJEs>

Programs and families can contact the program leadership directly at [PAIECMH@pakeys.org](mailto:PAIECMH@pakeys.org) with questions or concerns.

