

BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

Developing Routines

What are some examples of times where routines develop?

- Sleep/Bedtime
- Mealtime/Feeding
- Playtime
- Bath time
- Going on outings



DID YOU KNOW???

Routines can assist when:

- Children don't know what is happening next
- Children don't have the words yet to express their feelings

How does having routines help young children?

- Children learn to anticipate what will happen next
- Children usually get to spend special time with parent/caregiver during routines (bedtime, meals together, bath, etc.)
- Children see how you behave during routines and can learn new skills from your modeling
- Children feel a sense of security and will be calmer
- Children feel safe when their world is predictable and are more confident to explore their environment
- Children know expectations when a routine is followed and this can help reduce parent/child conflict as well as parent stress

Have you established routines for your child?

The following are helpful questions to ask yourself to help identify what routines you may have already established for yourself and your child

- Are your days very structured, or somewhat flexible?
- What do you do when it is time for your toddler to go to bed?
- Does your dinner-time have a particular pattern to it?
- Is there a special place you go with your baby on a certain day of each week?
- What other repetitive activities do you notice throughout the week?

How can we establish routines?

- Set a reasonable, regular, bedtime, as well as a reasonable daily meal and snack schedule.
- Develop a routine for each of the following times: wake up, feeding, bath time, playtime, sleep.
- Prepare your child by using reminders, which could include verbal directions or actions. For example having a bath and reading a book before bed might be a nice bedtime routine. A song or rhyme to encourage tidy up works well.
- Prevent problems by getting everything ready ahead of time and put as many distractions/toys away as possible.

Routines as a basis for learning

Daily routines are often thought of as just "maintenance" activities: meal times, running errands, getting ready for bed. But, these everyday times are opportunities to support development and learning, while having fun. Routines offer the chance to build self-confidence, curiosity, social skills, self-control, communication skills and more.

Take bath time for example:

A simple bath opens the door for practicing social skills, turn taking, talking, as well as learning cause and effect, and math and science concepts, like full and empty. It also provides a chance to build self-esteem and lets your baby know that they are special and capable of doing things.

Routines are key ingredients to learning. Routines are repetition. Children learn through repetition. By establishing routines in your child's life you are helping them learn, and they are learning to grow.

Routines also establish relationship; they are special times that you and your baby share together.

Establish and enjoy routines with your baby, you'll both be happier for it.