



# 17

## Handling Daily Routines

- After studying this chapter, you will be able to
- explain the importance of a daily schedule.
  - guide children successfully through the daily routines of dressing and undressing, eating, napping, toileting, and cleanup.
  - explain the use of transition techniques to move smoothly from one activity to another.

## Terms to Know

routines

pica

dawdling

transitions

auditory signals

**R**outines, such as dressing, undressing, eating, napping, and toileting, are everyday experiences. They promote the children's social, self-help, and learning skills. Routines at child care centers reassure children by providing a predictable pattern. By following a schedule, children know the order of daily events. They also know what to expect with each event. This offers them emotional security.

Daily routines provide opportunities for children to develop independence. Young children feel great satisfaction in doing things for themselves. See 17-1.

Daily routines will need your guidance. The children will need to learn the classroom schedule and daily routines. Before understanding time, children learn to understand a sequence of events. For

instance, Vivian and Merena, twin three-year-olds, began attending a local preschool. When their older sister asked what they do at preschool, Vivian responded in this way: "First we play; then we hear a story; then we have a snack; then we go outside; and then mama comes to get us."

## The Daily Schedule

A well-planned schedule provides the framework for the day's activities. Schedules for early childhood programs vary by type of program. For instance, the sequence of events in an all-day program will not be the same as that for a half-day program. Factors such as the length of the program's day and the time children arrive will need to be considered.

A well-planned schedule should help prevent conflicts. It must also be planned to meet the children's needs. Health and safety are important considerations. To feel comfortable and secure, children need to have consistency and predictable routines.

The daily schedule should be designed to include basic routines. Figure 17-2 shows the segments of a typical schedule. Include time for both indoor and outdoor play. Consider the weather when deciding how much time to allow for outdoor play. Remember to plan time for eating and napping, too.

When planning the daily schedule, include large blocks of open time. At least half of the day should be set aside for self-selected activities. Young children enjoy selecting activities and deciding how long to remain with each activity. Many preschool children have short attention spans.

Differences also exist in the speed at which they complete projects. By providing larger blocks of time, you will be meeting these children's individual needs.

There will be differences in each child's response to the schedule. For some children, the pace may be too fast, and they may feel stressed. Other children may become bored if the pace is too slow. Children's reactions often

17-1



Teaching children how to put on outerwear allows them to be more independent.

172

### Scheduling Segments for a Full-Day Program

- I. Arrival, greetings, and self-selected indoor activities
- II. Cleanup, toileting, and hand washing
- III. Snack, cleanup, and hand washing
- IV. Self-selected activities and cleanup
- V. Teacher-structured large group activity
- VI. Outdoor self-selected activities
- VII. Cleanup, toileting, and hand washing
- VIII. Lunch, cleanup, hand washing, and toothbrushing
- IX. Transitioning for nap time: quiet music or story time
- X. Toileting, hand washing, nap
- XI. Self-selected activities, indoor or outdoor
- XII. Cleanup, toileting, and hand washing
- XIII. Snack, cleanup, and hand washing
- XIV. Outdoor free time
- XV. Departure

A daily routine may give children a feeling of security.

depend on the number of hours they spend at the center. Children attending full time may feel differently than those attending part time.

## Arrival Routines

The arrival of children should follow a regular routine so children know what to expect. The children's arrival requires the teacher's full attention.

A typical arrival routine begins with the greeting of each child. Kneel down to the child's level, make eye contact, and make each child feel welcome. Acknowledge any item the child might have brought from home. The children should then be directed to store their outer garments and other belongings in their cubbies. They then can move to a self-selected activity until all the children have arrived.

Children react differently to separation from their parents or guardian. Some will

remain silent while others cry. Some will refuse to enter the room, and others will bring favorite toys from home. Children vary in the duration of their separation anxieties. Some children will feel comfortable in a day or two. For other children, this may take a week or even several weeks. As a teacher, recognizing and responding to these anxieties is important. Your caring and understanding will be a key in helping the children make this transition.

## Large Group Activities

In most programs, time is included in the schedule for large group activities. Teachers may refer to this segment as group time, story time, or circle time. Often this time is used for stories, songs, fingerplays, and discussions. If developmentally appropriate, teachers also use it for discussions about the weather and calendar.

Schedule large group activities when the children are well-rested and nourished, such as mid-morning. Since not all children arrive at one time, avoid scheduling group time at the beginning of the day. Problems can also occur when large group time is scheduled just before lunch. Usually the children are under the most stress at this time of day. They are becoming tired and hungry, which could impact their behavior.

Group time should take place in an area where there are few distractions. The children should be seated away from books, puzzles, and other materials that they could pick up. Many programs have a carpeted area for group time. Some teachers prefer using individual carpet squares. A teacher or aide may prearrange the squares prior to large group activity to make sure the children are not sitting too close together. It will also ensure that the children are sitting near the teacher and not blocking other children's views.

A key to the success of group time is being organized and ready. Immediately capture the children's attention with a fingerplay, puppet, or song. This will

encourage stragglers to pick up their pace and join the group. Always end group time before the children lose interest.

## ◆ Small Group Activities

Small group activity periods may be scheduled for 10 to 15 minutes. Typically, the four to six children in the group have similar interests or abilities. During this time, the children work with a teacher or aide. The purpose may be to teach specific concepts such as colors, numbers, shapes, or sizes.

## Self-Selected Activities

The largest block of time in the schedule is for self-selected activities. This may also be referred to as center time or free play. The activities may be scheduled for indoors or outdoors. A variety of developmentally appropriate activities should be available.

When longer play periods are available, children engage in more involved activities. Larger blocks of time help develop the children's attention spans. These longer time periods are also valuable to you. As a teacher, you can engage in conversations with the children, asking questions and assessing learning.

## Meals and Snacks

A half-day or two-hour preschool program usually provides a 15-minute snack period. Lunch is usually provided in centers that operate full-day programs. Typically a half hour is allowed for lunch. The amount of time needed for snack or lunch will vary depending on the age of the children and the number in the group.

## Nap Time

Check your state's regulations on rest or nap time. Most states require children enrolled in a full-day program to have a nap time.

Usually this is scheduled after lunch. Allow one to two hours for this activity. Nap time routines will be discussed later in this chapter.

## Daily Routines

Throughout the day, many routines take place in the center. As a teacher, you will need to know how to handle basic routines. These include dressing and undressing, eating, napping, toileting, and cleanup. Encourage the children to become as independent as possible in carrying out basic routines.

## Dressing and Undressing

As a teacher, you will want to encourage the children to dress and undress themselves as much as possible. Begin by telling the children what you expect of them. This is important. When four-year-old Frankie hands you his coat, refuse to help him put it on. Instead, tell Frankie he is able to dress himself. If needed, prompt him by providing verbal instruction. Once his coat is on, do not forget to praise him for his accomplishment. This will help him enjoy becoming independent. See 17-3.



Letting children know they are capable of dressing and undressing themselves helps children build independence.

Children should also be responsible for hanging up their coats. You may notice that many of the children simply lay their coats in their lockers. Do not allow this. For instance, if you see Eileen lay her coat in the locker, say "Eileen, you need to hang your coat on the hook." If she does not understand, show her how to hang it on the hook. Then take the coat off the hook and let Eileen hang it herself.

Label lockers so children can find their own spaces. The labeling method you use will vary with the ages of the children. Names are usually written on the lockers for infants. This helps both teachers and families. For two-year-olds, use a picture of the child. Names and symbols are helpful to three-year-olds. If children cannot recognize their names, they can find their symbols. Give each child a different symbol. Most four- and five-year-olds can recognize their names.

### Suggestions for Families

Dressing can be time-consuming and frustrating for teachers and children. For this reason, some centers provide families with a list of clothing suggestions for the children. The list usually includes the following:

- Send an extra set of clothing for your child to keep at school. These can be used in case of an emergency. For instance, a child might fall in mud, rip a pair of pants, or have a toileting accident.
- Attach labels to the inside of your child's clothing. It is common for several children to have the same style and size of clothes. Labeling helps prevent confusion.
- Select clothing for your child with large zippers, buttons, or snaps. This makes dressing easier for children who do not have well-developed fine-motor skills.
- Boots and shoes should fit properly and slide on and off easily.
- Shoelaces should not be too long because they can be a tripping hazard and are hard for children to tie. You may want

to choose shoes with Velcro® closings, which are easier for younger children to manage independently.

- Consider buying elastic-waist slacks and shorts instead of snap or button types. They are easier for children to handle during toileting.

### Demonstrating

Buttoning, zipping, pulling on boots, tying shoes, and putting fingers in gloves are all actions that can be demonstrated. Demonstrating at the child's eye level is the most effective. Sometimes verbal guidance is all a child needs. At other times, you may need to start an action. Allow the child to finish the process. He or she will feel a sense of accomplishment. For example, Siri can put on his coat but cannot get the zipper started. Start the zipper and have Siri finish zipping it by himself.

**Tying Shoes.** Tying is a skill that requires advanced coordination. As a result, most children do not learn this task until five years of age.

There are several methods for teaching children how to tie shoes. One method is to place the child on your lap. From this angle, the child can observe the process. For most children, the easiest technique to learn is to loop each string like a bunny ear. Tie these loops into a double knot. Encourage the child to repeat this process.

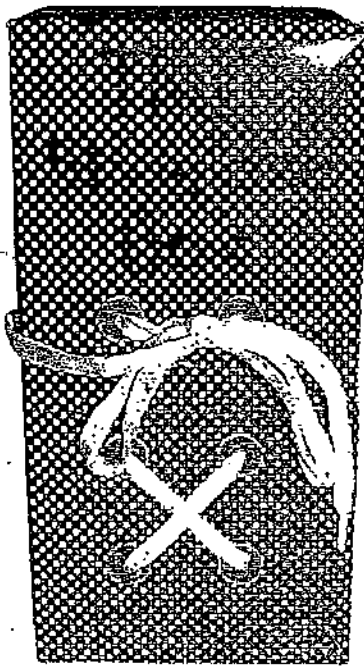
Some children will have shoes that clasp with Velcro instead of tie with laces. Bring shoes with ties to the center to teach these children how to tie. Let them use these shoes to practice. This will help them learn tying skills, or you can let them practice on a shoelace box, 17-4.

**Boots.** Boots that are too small can be hard to put on. When this happens, place a plastic bag over the child's shoes or feet. This will help the boot slip on and off more easily.

Some centers keep a box of surplus boots. When a child is wearing boots that are too



17-4



A shoebox is useful for teaching tying to children.

small, the teacher can make an exchange. Boots from this box are also handy if a child forgets to bring boots from home.

Children can practice putting on and taking off their own boots, or they may practice using the extras in the box.

**Coats.** To demonstrate putting on a coat, lay the child's coat, button or zipper side up, on the floor. Have the child kneel at the collar end. Tell the child to place his or her hands and arms into the sleeves. Then tell the child to put it over his or her head. Use your own sweater or jacket to demonstrate this for the children. See 17-5.

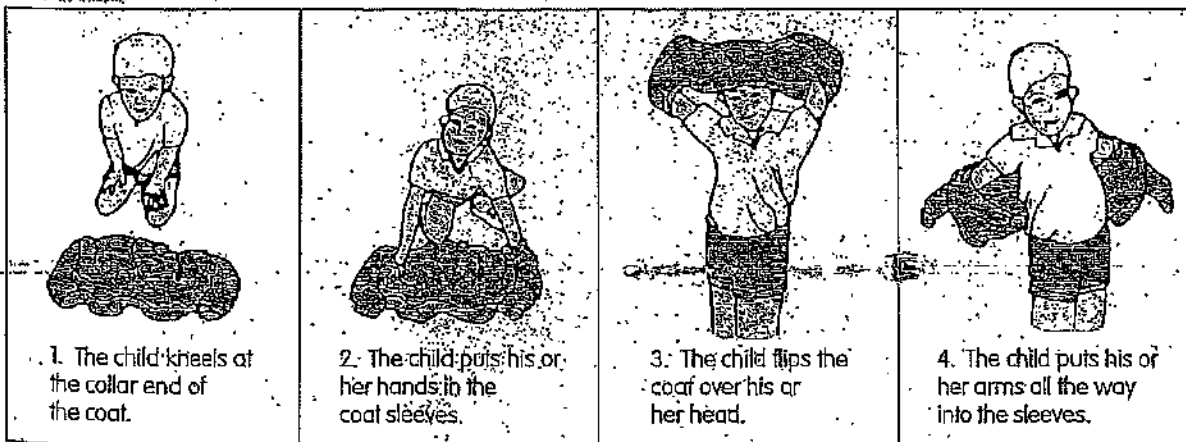
## Eating

Nutritional services provided by centers vary. Some centers serve only lunch, while others may also serve breakfast. Snacks may be the only food served in centers that do not operate all day. Some centers require that children bring their own bag lunches. While most centers provide older children with meals, they require parents to provide infant formulas, breast milk, or baby foods.

As a teacher, you will have many concerns during mealtime. A main concern is serving nutritious meals that children will like. This concern is addressed in Chapter 12, "Planning Nutritious Meals and Snacks."

You will also want the children to enjoy eating and practice their-table manners. Making mealtime pleasant and orderly is another concern of teachers, 17-6. This means making meals appropriate for the ages, abilities, and interests of children. It also

17-5



This technique can be used by children to help them learn how to put on a coat.

17-6



Proper manners and order contribute to a pleasant snack.

means teaching rules of etiquette during meals.

You will notice that children's appetites change. Children's appetites are influenced by illness, stage of development, physical activity, and a body's individual nutrient needs. Emotions can also affect appetite. For example, if Lila has cried since her parents dropped her off this morning, she may not be hungry at lunchtime. Appetite changes will require you to be flexible regarding the children during meals.

### Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers have definite food likes and dislikes, 17-7. It is not unusual for them to spit out or refuse foods they do not like. On the other hand, they will eagerly eat foods they enjoy.

A cup can be introduced as early as six to seven months of age. At first, children may take only a few swallows. Spilling will

17-7



Infants can use facial expressions to communicate their food preferences.

occur for several months. Later, children will enjoy using cups by themselves. To help these children, provide spill-proof cups.

Once children become mobile, their interest in food may decrease. During this stage, some children are too interested in moving to sit still very long. Even if placed in a high chair or feeding table, they may try to get out and continue with their play.

Provide finger foods to infants and toddlers whenever possible. By picking up small bits of food, the child will develop fine-motor skills and hand-eye coordination skills. It also gives them a sense of accomplishment and helps them in developing independence.

Interest in self-feeding using spoons may occur between 15 and 18 months of age. You will need to be patient with children who are learning to feed themselves. You may have to help them fill their spoons. Since spilling occurs often, the children should wear bibs.

Also expect food to be spilled on the feeding tray, high chair, and floor. Wipe up the spills immediately so others do not slip on them.

## Two-Year-Olds

Two-year-old children become increasingly skilled at handling cups and spoons. Provide these children with child-sized spoons and small, unbreakable cups. Fill the cups only halfway. Then if a drink is spilled, there is less to clean up.

Use small milk or juice pitchers (16 ounces) with two-year-olds. Encourage the children to fill their own cups. Watch carefully and provide support. See 17-8.

## Three-Year-Olds

By the age of three, children have distinct food preferences. They may refuse to eat certain foods because of their color, shape, or texture. Your attitude will help children accept these foods. In addition, family food attitudes and preferences can influence what

children may eat. Other children can also influence food preferences. Some children who flatly refuse to eat vegetables at home may enjoy eating them with their peers.

Three-year-olds are old enough to assist with mealtime. Ask them to set the table. Make place mats containing outlines of the plate, glass, fork, and spoon. These patterns will help children set the table properly with minimal adult assistance. Provide forks and spoons to help the children develop handling skills. Use glasses with weighted bottoms to help prevent spills. Use pitchers with lids and pour spouts. Shallow bowls allow the children to see what is in the bowls.

Have children serve themselves. As a rule, tell children to fill their milk glasses only halfway. Keep portions small. If children want more food, they may ask for second portions.

Keep a wet sponge on the table for spills. When children spill, accept this as a normal occurrence. Avoid scolding the child. Rather, guide the child in wiping up the spill.

## Four- and Five-Year-Olds

Four- and five-year-olds like to help at mealtime. They may ask to set the table, serve, and assist with after-meal cleanup. They may also enjoy helping to prepare the meal. Encourage them to do so. For a classroom activity, have them prepare pudding, rolls, or other simple foods, 17-9. Later, serve these foods for snack or lunch.

Older children enjoy talking at the table. You may wish to help them begin conversations. Mention activities they have seen, heard, or done. They will begin talking with each other and naturally move on to other subjects.

## Limits

Limits for eating depend on the ages of the children. However, general limits might include the following:

- Taste all foods before asking for seconds of food or milk.

17-8



Supervise three-year-olds as they pour their own drinks. They may need help handling the pitcher.



17-9



Children enjoy helping prepare foods they will eat later.

- Remain at the table until everyone has finished.
- Wipe up your own spills.
- Eat food only from your own plate.
- Say thank you after someone has served or passed you food.
- Say please when asking to have food passed or served to you.

## Eating Problems

Eating problems are common during the preschool years. These problems usually peak at three years of age. Eating will remain a problem for 25 percent of four- and five-year-olds. In most cases, problems will end somewhere around the sixth birthday. Food refusal, dawdling, pica, and vomiting are all eating problems that can become serious.

**Food Refusal.** Food refusal problems are related to a lack of interest in food. Food refusal often begins between one and two years of age, 17-10. At this time, children's

need for food decreases. Some children may need only one meal a day. Refusing food because it is not needed is not a problem. However, children who do not eat even when they need food have food refusal problems.

Lack of exercise or energy, excess energy (hyperactivity), and illness can all cause a lack of interest in food. These fairly common problems sometimes cure themselves. There are steps you can take, however, to help children with food refusal problems.

To encourage children to eat, serve small portions. Avoid pushing the children to eat. Instead, talk with the families of children having problems. Find out what these children eat at home. Despite mealtime refusal at the center, these children may be getting proper nourishment at home.

Do not provide extra snacks to children who refuse to eat breakfast and lunch. If you do, they will not be hungry at mealtime.

**Pica.** Pica is a craving for nonfood items. Cravings include paper, soap, rags, and even toys. This condition is fairly uncommon in most preschool children.

If you think that a child may have this problem, ask other staff members to observe the child. Compare your observations. Discuss the problem with the center director. You may want to schedule a conference with the family to discuss the problem. A combined effort between parents, medical professionals, and teachers may solve the problem.

17-10



Toddlers are especially known for their strong responses to foods they dislike.

**Dawdling.** While one child eats only one or two bites, the other children may have finished an entire meal. It is common to have several children who eat slowly in a group of preschoolers. This is called dawdling. Some may hold food in their mouth for a long time, failing to chew or swallow it. Others are so busy talking at the table they forget to eat. Still others may push the food around their plates or play with it. These children lack interest in food.

Many times dawdling is an attempt to gain attention. Therefore, do not urge or threaten dawdling children. Instead, provide these children with small portions of food. After being given a reasonable amount of time to eat, clear the table without comment. Children will learn that if they want to eat, they must do so in a timely fashion.

**Vomiting.** Young children are able to *induce* (to produce on purpose) vomiting. If a child in your class vomits often without other signs of illness, he or she is possibly inducing it.

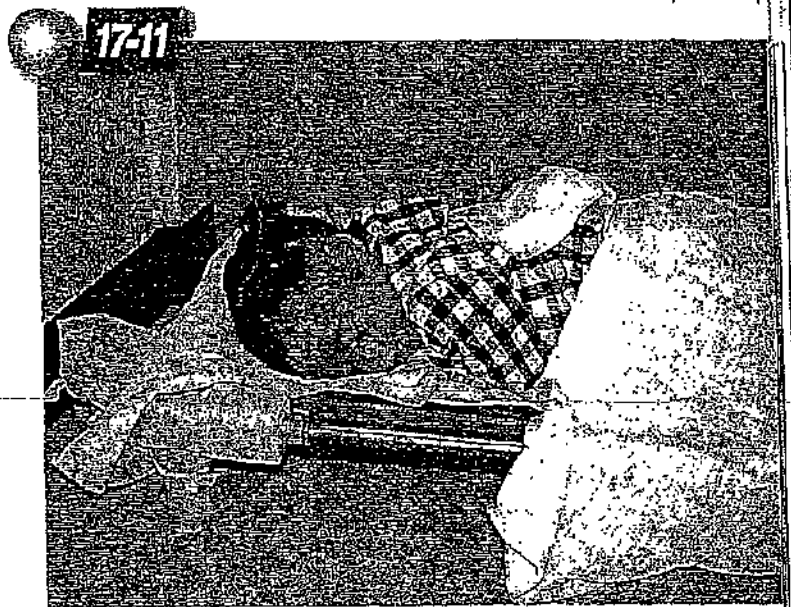
If you are sure a child is not sick, ignore repeated vomiting. Clean up the mess quickly, without emotion. If the child notices any concern, he or she may begin vomiting to get your attention.

You should, however, share the child's behavior with the family. Find out if this behavior also occurs at home during or right after a meal. If it does, you will need to work with the center director and parents to solve the problem.

## Napping

"Will my child be required to take a nap?" This question is often asked by parents who are thinking of enrolling their child in a center. Some children may have outgrown napping at home. Your response will depend on your state's child care licensing regulations and center policies.

Most states require that preschool children nap at least one hour, 17-11. A center can expand that requirement if they



Naps are required in many states.

wish. For instance, if a state requires all children under the age of five to have naps, a center may expand that rule to require all enrolled children to have naps. In any case, you should check your state's guidelines for requirements.

Most child care centers have a set nap time. At the end of this time, most children are awake. If not, they are gently woken. You may note that a certain child needs to be woken every day. If this happens, the child may not be getting enough rest at home. This needs to be discussed with the family. Check with your center director to find out who is responsible for talking to the family. If you are asked to contact the family, use a positive approach. Share your observations with the family. Try to arrive at a solution together.

## Nap Time Rituals

Schedule quiet activities prior to nap time. Children often enjoy hearing a story at this time. Select stories that will soothe the children. Four-year-olds may like to look at books until they fall asleep. You may want to play soft music.

Lack of rest can cause irritability in young children. Most preschool children,

tired or not, can postpone sleep at nap time. Younger children may simply cry. Older children, however, may make repeated demands for your attention. They may request to go to the washroom or have a drink of water. In most cases, these are only pleas for attention.

Plan ahead to prevent children from making too many demands at nap time. First, have the children use the toilet, brush their teeth, wash their hands, and have a drink of water before they lie down. Ask if anyone needs a tissue or wants to look quietly at a book. Make sure they have their blankets and stuffed toys. After this, begin to cover them. Do not be surprised, however, if a child still asks for another drink of water or trip to the bathroom. These rituals seem natural to most two- and three-year-old children. They sincerely believe their needs are real. However, if you allow these children to meet these needs before nap time, they will have an easier time getting and staying settled. See 17-12.

Not all children will fall asleep at nap time. Their need for sleep varies. It is common for some of the five-year-olds to remain awake. Five-year-olds will cooperate, however, if nap time limits are stated clearly and enforced.

Children who do fall asleep may tell you they had bad dreams while sleeping. Others may cry out in their sleep. When this happens, calmly approach the child. Let the child know you are near. One way to do this is to hold the child's hand or straighten the covers.

As a teacher, it is important to respect the children's need for sleep. Because it is difficult for some children to fall asleep, try to remain as quiet as possible. Avoid talking to other teachers during nap time.

## Toileting

The toileting needs of infants are met through the use of diapers. Infants cannot control *elimination*, bowel and bladder release. For them, elimination is a reflex action. The



Allow children to remove shoes and socks at nap time. They will be more comfortable and relaxed.

first few weeks after birth, infants eliminate many times each day. They may cry when it happens. The number of eliminations will decrease as the infant gets older. However, the volume increases. By 28 weeks, a child may remain dry from one to two hours. When they do eliminate, however, the diaper is usually soaking wet. It may leak unless it is changed immediately. Diapers need to be checked often and changed when wet to prevent diaper rash.

Children differ in their toilet learning needs and schedule. Some children use the toilet as early as two years. Others may not have full bladder and bowel control until three years or later. For some children, toilet learning will take just a few days. Other children may require several months.

## Health and Safety

### Using Potty Chairs

Because non-flushing toilets, or potty chairs, can pose a significant sanitation risk, take special care when you use them. Keep the following guidelines in mind when using potty chairs:

- Empty, clean, and sanitize the potty chairs after each use.
- Clean and sanitize potty chairs in a sink that is used only for this purpose.
- Use potty chairs *only* in the bathroom area.
- Keep potty chairs out of children's reach when not in use.
- Wash your hands thoroughly according to accepted standards when assisting children with toileting or cleaning and sanitizing potty chairs. If desired, wear disposable vinyl gloves when cleaning and sanitizing potty chairs. Remove the gloves when finished and follow up with the proper hand-washing technique.

### Toilet Learning Timetable

Children cannot be taught to perform toilet functions until their central nervous systems are ready. As a rule, this does not occur until after two years of age. At this age, most children will express their need to use

the toilet. Some may pull down their pants and sit on the toilet. Others will tell you they have to use the bathroom.

Each child in the center will have his or her own toilet learning timetable. Never force children to develop self-regulation. When they are ready, they will master control of their bodily functions. Instead praise them as they become better at keeping themselves dry. Controlling elimination is one step toward independence. It is a real accomplishment for young children.

Certain factors may affect a child's toilet learning timetable. Illness, a new baby in the home, or weather changes are common factors. Remember, too, that toileting accidents are common during a child's first few weeks at the child care center. These accidents may indicate the emotional stress the child is feeling in a new environment. Another factor is the toilet learning attitudes and practices at home. In some homes, adults may overreact to children's toileting accidents by showing their disapproval. These children may feel ashamed by their failure to control elimination. In the center, you need to be sensitive to children's feelings following an accident. Quietly help them change into clean clothes.

### Guidance

As a teacher, keep a matter-of-fact attitude in toilet teaching. Shaming and scolding have no place in helping a child develop control. Instead, provide children with the facilities and encouragement to stay dry.

Have toilet seats or potty chairs available. If you provide a seat for the toilet, also provide a step stool to help the children reach the toilet. Not all children like to sit on the toilet. Some are afraid they will fall in the toilet and be flushed down. These children will prefer the potty chair.

During toilet learning, the child's clothing should be easy to manage. Pants that pull down easily work better than those that are hard to unfasten. Also during this time, it is a good idea to keep several extra pairs of underwear and clothing at the center.

Children often provide clues when they have to use the toilet. Some start wiggling. Others cross their legs. When you notice these signs, provide reminders to the child. You can remind the child by saying, "It is toilet time again," or "Louis, do you need to use the toilet?" After children use the toilet, remind them to flush the toilet and wash their hands. At the same time, be sure to wash your own hands. See 17-13.

## Cleanup

Cleanup is an important routine in early childhood classrooms. Children learn to be responsible for themselves, their belongings, and classroom materials and equipment. Cleanup time can be stressful for a new teacher. Consider Carlos, who recently began teaching in a preschool. He frequently finds himself raising his voice and scolding or nagging the children to help in cleanup. Carlos's frustration is not uncommon. The following suggestions may be helpful.

### Guidance

Try to maintain a positive attitude toward cleanup. Scolding or nagging the children

usually is ineffective. You will discover that some children are unresponsive and do not want to participate.

Begin by setting firm ground rules and then follow through. All children should be expected to participate in cleanup. You must deal on an individual basis with the child who refuses to participate. You may say "Tanya, you need to put the puzzle away." Observe Tanya closely. If she walks away from the table, take her hand. Then say "Tanya, come. You need to return the puzzle to the tray." If Tanya still refuses to put the puzzle away, she needs help in understanding the consequences. Explain that if she fails to put the puzzle away, she will not be able to play with the puzzles.

You will find that some children need encouragement or reminders. You might try saying the following:

- Help me put the blocks away.
- Show me where the puzzles are stored.
- Where do we hang these dress-up clothes?
- Timmy, you worked hard making your block structure. Now show Malcolm how to put the blocks away.

Foster independence by visually assisting the children in seeing where materials and equipment belong. For instance, in the woodworking area, paint a silhouette of each tool on a piece of poster board. Hooks in the dramatic play area should be available for hanging dress-up clothes. To assist the children, attach an eight-inch loop of string to each item of clothing. On the block shelves, provide separate sections for each shape and size of blocks. The manipulative area needs to have separate, transparent containers for different types of pieces.

Young children enjoy pleasing others. They will work hard to win your approval. Thus, it is important that children's efforts at cleanup be praised. Praise their efforts by saying "Sally, I like the way you are helping Frankie put the blocks away" or "Ampario, I like the way you picked up all of the pieces of your puzzle."

17-13

### Tips for Guiding Toilet Learning

- Each child has his or her own toilet learning timetable. Never force children to learn before they are ready.
- Maintain a matter-of-fact attitude.
- Praise children as they become better at keeping dry.
- Do not shame or scold.
- Make toilet seats or potty chairs available.
- Watch for clues that children provide when they need to use the toilet.

Remember these rules for effective toileting guidance.



## Transitions

Transitions are changes from one activity to another or moves from one place to another. They occur many times during the day. Children may go from self-selected activities to using the bathroom to snack time to outdoor play in just a few hours. Transitions must be carefully planned to help children get through the daily routine without a fuss.

Tell the children in advance that a transition will occur. Many teachers provide a five-minute warning prior to making the transition to the next activity. This will allow children time to finish what they are doing. You might play the piano for five minutes or use an egg timer.

There are four basic methods for making successful transitions. You may use concrete objects, visual signals, novelty, or auditory signals. You may use several types of transitions in one day. Remember to be consistent. Young children respond better if they know what to expect. Therefore, it is best to use the same transition for individual activities. For instance, play the same cleanup song every day to let the children know it is cleanup time.

### Concrete Objects

Using concrete objects as a form of transition involves children moving items from one place to another. This technique directs a child's attention from one activity to another, 17-14. Examples include the following:

- "Leon, please put your picture in your cubby." This will direct Leon from an art activity to a new activity.
- "Rose, hang up your coat." Rose will move from an outdoor activity to an indoor activity.
- "Ting, here is some play dough. Take it to the art table." Ting is directed toward starting an art activity.
- "Shilpa, put these washcloths on the bathroom hook." This signals the end of cleanup.

17-14



Putting away toys helps prepare children for the next activity.

### Visual Signals

Using visual signals is another transition method. This method involves informing children of a change through signals they can see. For instance, when you show the children a picture of lunchtime, the children move to the lunch table. After story time, you might hold up a picture of outdoor play. This will serve as a signal to the children that it is time to put on outdoor clothing and wait at the door for you. See 17-15 for other examples of visual transitions.

The first few times you use visual signals, you will need to explain them to the children. After you use them several times, the children will know what to expect.

### Novelty

Novelty transitions involve the use of unusual, new actions or devices to move the children from one activity to another.

Locomotion is one type of transition. The children use motion to make their transition. For instance, ask the children to pretend they are elephants. Have them walk like heavy elephants to the snack table, or ask them to tiptoe lightly like tiny monkeys.

Using locomotion is limited only by imagination. Children can march, skip, or walk backwards. Before introducing a transition, however, consider the abilities of the children. For instance, do not ask a group of two- or three-year-olds to skip. They may not have developed this skill yet.

Transportation is another type of novelty transition. The children can move like freight trains, jets, buses, or cars. Each time you introduce a locomotion or transportation transition, get involved with the children. Model the movement you want them to make.

Identification games are also used for novelty transition. For instance, you may direct the children from one activity to another by asking "Who is wearing red today? You may go into the bathroom and wash your hands before we have our snacks." Continue using other colors that the children are wearing until every child has departed from the group.

Novelty transitions can also be made using single alphabet letters. Direct the

children to another activity by asking "Whose name starts with the letter T? You may go outside." Continue calling out letters until all of the children are outdoors.

## Auditory Signals

Auditory signals inform the children of a change through the use of sound. A bell, timer, Autoharp®, tambourine, or piano can all inform children of a transition. Some teachers use a simple song or chord of music as a transition signal. For example, when Mr. Andrews plays "Mary Had a Little Lamb" on the piano, the children know it is time to clean up.

Auditory signals also need to be developed for individuals. There will be times when you may wish to signal only one child. For instance, you may quietly tell a child that he or she needs to clean up or go to the snack table. This is called an *individual transition*.

Auditory signals are quite useful for providing warnings. For instance, a ringing bell tells the children that playtime will end in five minutes. At the end of the five minutes, they know it is time to clean up.

17-15

### Using Visual Transition

Visual Transition Method	Application of Method
Construction paper	Use to break children into small groups. Place a piece of blue, red, green, or yellow construction paper at each table. Divide children into four groups and assign each group one of these colors. Have groups find their tables.
Hand motions	Use on playground to motion children indoors or to a specific area.
Blinking lights	Use to gain children's attention or to warn children to complete an activity.
Clock	Use with older children by telling them "When the big hand is on the 12, it will be lunchtime."
Words	Use to dismiss children from a group. Make a name card for each child. Hold cards up one at a time. Children are dismissed when they see their names.

Visual signals can be used many ways for transition.

## Summary

A daily schedule and routines provide structure to each day. Within this structure, children have the opportunity to develop independence. Having a predictable schedule and helping children handle daily routines allow the center to run smoothly. This also offers the children emotional security.

A well-planned schedule provides the framework for the day's activities. Schedules for early childhood programs vary by type of program. Factors such as the length of the program's day and the time children arrive will need to be considered.

The daily schedule must also be planned to meet the children's physical and psychological needs. Health and safety are important considerations. For comfort and security, children need to have consistency and predictable routines.

Dressing, undressing, eating, napping, toileting, and cleanup are all daily routines. Each of these presents its own particular challenges and problems during the course of a day. For instance, asking children to participate with cleanup seems like a predictable activity. However, without the proper guidance, this task may become frustrating for both the children and the teacher. Therefore, it is important for you to learn positive guidance strategies to help children learn responsibility.

## Review and Reflect

1. How do routines and daily schedules benefit young children?
2. Why is it important to provide large blocks of open time in the daily schedule?
3. Describe a typical arrival routine.
4. Why do many programs ask families to send a second set of clothing for children to keep at school?
5. Name five factors that may influence a child's appetite.
6. List three limits for eating that might be used with young children.
7. Give two suggestions for handling a child who refuses to eat.
8. What is pica?
9. Do child care centers have the right to decide if nap time should be included in the daily schedule? Explain your answer.
10. At what age are most children ready to begin toilet learning?
11. Describe one way you could encourage children to participate in cleanup.
12. List four types of transitions and give an example of each.

Jarrett