

Provide Daily Routines and Predictability (Temporal Environment)

Predictable schedules and routines create a sense of security, help young children to learn about their world, help them to adjust to new situations, and prevent challenging behaviors. Routines (daily or during group interactions) help young children feel secure within a nurturing environment. Routines are also critical for settings where children say good-bye to parents as it helps them feel safe within a nurturing network of professionals.

Benefits:

1. Routines provide children with feelings of safety and comfort.
2. Predictable expectations and schedules allow for children to master their environment.
3. Children are better prepared to manage change.

A structured and predictable environment includes the timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities that take place throughout the day or activity:

- **Timing:** There is a rhythm to the experience and children come to depend on the established, consistent schedule.
- **Ritualized Routines:** Routines involve entering and leaving, eating and sleeping, playing and transitioning.
- **Preparation for Change:** Children are prepared for changes and transitions are planned.
- **Responsive:** Schedule and routines meet the unique needs of children and families and align with the abilities and activity levels of children.

10 CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROVIDING STRUCTURE AND PREDICTABILITY

1. The classroom or activity schedule includes a predictable routine.
2. There are visual reminders of the schedule and routines.
3. The schedule can include a combination of small-group and large-group activities, both indoors and outdoors.
4. The schedule allows for changes based upon the unique needs of their program, children, families, and staff.
5. Transitions are smooth. For classroom settings schedule only a few transitions per day.
6. Routines are structured and predictable to promote children's independence (children learn to independently follow classroom or activity routines).
7. Encourage children to take on a role in carrying out routines.
8. Respond to children's individualized needs while establishing and implementing routines.
9. Support children as they transition between home and the program.
10. Invite children to be a part of planning and reflecting on choices throughout the day/activity.

Putting it into practice:

Consider the needs of your children and families. How does your schedule address those needs?
