



Using Routines

Routines are things we do every day; routines are like instructions. Routines keep children on task. Children do well in well-ordered and predictable environments. Routines build important social studies skills:

- **Responsibility** – Routines, like brushing teeth every night before bed, help children learn to care for themselves, their belongings, and the home.
- **Awareness Time** – Routines, such packing a school backpack every morning after breakfast, help children understand what comes next in the day.
- **Social & Communication Skills** – Routines, like picking up toys everyday between lunch and naptime, help children learn to communicate with, care for, and get along with others.

Tips for parents. When setting up routines, remember to:

- ✓ **Be Consistent:** Establish a routine and follow it; no matter who is caring for your child, the routine should be the same.
- ✓ **Give choices.** Let children make some of their own decisions.
- ✓ **Use Simple Steps.** Break down the routine into simple steps. State each step one at a time with positive and clearly stated directions.
- ✓ **Be Realistic.** Your child cannot do everything that an adult can do. Make sure that routines are appropriate for your child's age and skills.
- ✓ **Practice** – Do the routine over and over . . . practice makes perfect!
- ✓ **Give Guidance.** Show your child how to do each step. Remind children what to do. Do not scold or yell when your child is learning a routine.
- ✓ **Remain Flexible.** Don't let the daily schedule be a rigid time clock. Keep the order of the routine (the sequence) the same, but be flexible with *how long* activities happen.
- ✓ **Celebrate success.**

Parents can help. You can:

- Set a schedule for your child. Have regular times for eating, bathing, and going to bed. This will help your baby know what to expect and when to expect it.
- Hang a “picture chart” of each routine where your child can see it. This will help your child learn the steps and follow established routines. For example, a “morning wake-up” routine chart could include: getting dressed, making the bed, and brushing teeth. Or, a “bedtime routine” could be: bathing, brushing teeth, putting on PJs, reading a story, singing a song, and saying good night.

Book Suggestions

[A Busy Day at the Farm](#) by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin

[Night Night Fuzzy](#) by Harriet Ziefert and Elliot Krelloff