



# Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

## Promoting Healthy Emotional Development through Routines

What is the first thing that you do when you wake up in the morning? Do you do the same activities in the same order every day? If so, you have a routine. We all establish and maintain some degree of routines in our lives because it gives us a sense of familiarity and lessens stress and anxiety. Routines are critical for a young child. They help a child build trust in the important people in her life, as she comes to learn that they will provide for her needs. When a child is able to trust, she feels safe to freely explore the world around her; and this is when learning takes place.

Whether you have an infant, toddler, or preschooler, you can establish routines in her everyday activities. Because a very young child is unable to establish her own routines, she needs you to create it for her. By helping your child to feel safe, loved, and cared for, you are providing a climate for healthy emotional development.

The following are some guidelines for developing routines:

- ♥ Observe your child's natural wake/sleep and eating cycles and plan daily activities around it.
- ♥ Have a daily plan. Establish and follow a general flow of the day, but make adjustments as needed throughout the day. A daily plan may include breakfast, play, snack, lunch, reading, nap, snack, outdoor play or a daily walk in the stroller.
- ♥ Have a weekly plan. A weekly plan may include regular days for specific activities. For example, story time at the library on Mondays or going to the market on Fridays.

- ♥ Provide time to transition between activities. When moving between activities, such as from quiet to more active ones, use a familiar signal—your voice, gestures, or body

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### In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ Age-specific information and suggestions about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ Featured activities for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

# Infants

Many new parents have questions about schedules. They may ask, “How do I make my baby follow a regular schedule?” Forcing your baby to follow a specific time schedule will only cause frustration for you and your baby. Rather than trying to follow a time-based schedule, establish routines—a regular pattern of doing things. By creating routines, you can find the best way to guide baby’s natural rhythms and needs.

Routines for an infant revolve around daily care needs. When you respond in the same caring manner to her crying, need for a diaper change, hunger, need for sleep, and attempts at play, your baby learns what to expect, and this gives her a feeling of security.

The following are some fun routines to try with your infant:

- ♥ Say, “1-2-3-up” before you pick her up, every time you pick her up. Soon, she will anticipate that she will be picked up when you say “1-2-3...up!”
- ♥ Create a bedtime routine. When your baby knows what’s coming next, she will be more relaxed and more likely to fall asleep quickly. For example, give her a bath, then brush her teeth (or wipe her gums with a soft, clean towel), read a story while holding her on your lap or sing the same lullaby to her each night, then place her in her crib, and give her a goodnight kiss.

## Activity for Infants: *Make a Special Storytime Book*

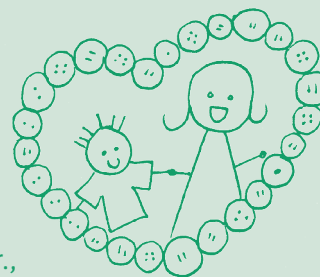
### Materials:

- Photos of people familiar to your baby
- Glue or tape
- Paper
- Stapler or hole puncher and yarn

### What to Do:

1. Read the book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr., (available at your local library) to your baby.
2. Next, gather some photos of people who are familiar to your baby—mommy, daddy, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.
3. Glue each photo, including one of your baby, on separate pieces of paper, and use her page for the cover of the book.
4. Bind the pages together with a stapler or punch holes in the pages and tie them together with yarn.
5. On the front cover (the page with baby’s photo), write the title of the book and include your baby’s name. For example, “Jessi, Jessi, Who Do You See?”
6. On each of the following pages, write the name of the person in the photo using the rhythm text. For example, “I see Daddy looking at me. Daddy, Daddy, who do you see?”
7. Continue writing on each page, using the name of the person in the photo and end the story with, “I see my family looking at me. That’s who I see.”
8. Read the story to your baby and point out all the people who are familiar to her. Make reading this book part of your routine, either before bedtime or when she wakes up.

(See page 5 for information on how these activities helps her development and school readiness.)



# Toddlers

As toddlers test their independence, their ability to control their body movements, and their language skills, keeping consistent routines may become challenging. However, consistency is still the basis for a toddler's sense of security. Having routines could help limit the amount of behavior corrections you may need to provide to a toddler. Although your child is now better able to predict what should happen next, she may need some gentle reminders about the routines when she



gets sidetracked by wanting to do something else. For example, you could say something like, "I know you want to hear a story now, but it's time to brush your teeth. Remember, brushing teeth comes first, and then it's story time."

The following are some ways to help you maintain consistency in your routines for your child.

- ♥ Continue to follow daily routines for meals, naps, play, bath, and bed times.
- ♥ Set a timer to allow your child time to end an activity, and ease into transitions to the next activity. For example say, "In 5 minutes it'll be time to clean up and take a bath. I will set the timer for 5 minutes." You can even give the timer to your child and have her set it herself.

Establishing and maintaining consistent routines with your toddler will help her to be prepared for what is expected of her and to begin to regulate her actions and behaviors. All of this will contribute to her sense of pride and belonging.

## Activity for Toddlers: *Family Meal Time*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. Turn off the TV and do not answer any phone calls during the meal time.
2. Have your child help you set the table, or put the silverware/chopsticks and napkins in a basket on the table where family members can help themselves.
3. Sit and eat together as a family. Let your child serve herself, if she is able to.
4. Allow everyone to take turns talking about the day while you eat. If you are having breakfast together, talk about your plans for the day
5. Answer your child's questions. Curiosity motivates children to learn. When your child asks a question, listen and respond, taking this as an opportunity to teach your child.
6. After dinner, have everyone assist in cleaning up, taking their dishes to the sink, wiping their area of the table, etc.
7. Use this time to connect with your child and family members!



*(See page 5 for information on how these activities help your child's development and school readiness.)*

# Preschoolers

As children get older and as family circumstances change, routines also change, but preschoolers still need the reassurance that you will respond in the same caring way to help them with their needs. Many children in this age group may be entering a child care setting for the first time. If your child will be spending time away from you in a care setting, whether it's a friend or relative's home or a child care center, establishing a "goodbye routine" will help her cope with this transition. For example, walk her to the care provider's home and help her put away her lunch. If permitted at the care setting, do a short activity together, such as reading a book, then give her a hug, and say goodbye. By doing this, your child can prepare for the "goodbye," which she knows will come right after you read a story to her. When you go through the same routine each day, she will know what to expect and can relax and enjoy her day away from



home with the confidence that you will be back for her at the end of the day. Routines may need adjustment at times. During these times, give children time to practice new routines. Remember that children differ in the amount of time and practice they need to adjust to something new.

## Activities for Preschoolers: *What Comes Next?*

### Materials:

- Two 8 ½ x 11-inch sheets of paper
- Jumbo crayons or washable markers
- Tape

### What to Do:

1. Cut two 8 ½ x 11" sheets of paper in half. Use three of the four half pieces for this activity.
2. On the first sheet, have your child draw a picture of something she normally does in the morning, such as eating breakfast.
3. On the second sheet, have her draw something she does at midday such as playing outside.
4. On the last sheet, have her draw something that she does at night such as brushing her teeth.
5. Ask your child to put the pictures in order by asking, "After you get up in the morning, which do you do first? Which comes next? Which one is last?"
6. Tape the three sheets together in the correct sequence from left to right. Number the sheets 1, 2, and 3.
7. Ask your child to tell you about each scene. Write down anything she says to create a short story that you can read together.
8. Read the story together or ask her to tell you the story.

*(See page 5 for information on how these activities help your child's development and school readiness.)*





# How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development.

## Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles, e.g., facial muscles, fingers, hands, and toes

## Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop her unique identity
- ♥ Feel important and good about herself

## Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Learn to ask and answer questions
- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use descriptive language

## Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop early math skills like quantifying, comparing, sorting, grouping, and ordering
- ♥ Develop thinking and problem solving skills



# Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show her how to safely handle the items and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before and after preparing any food.

## Tasty Tots

Adapted from: [http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/r4hk\\_homes.html](http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/r4hk_homes.html)

### Ingredients:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 5 cups sweet potatoes, peeled, coarsely grated                            | ½ t salt                |
| 2 cups canned low-sodium garbanzo beans, with liquid, pureed in a blender | ½ t granulated garlic   |
| ½ cup green onions, finely chopped  | ¼ t ground black pepper |
| 2 T vegetable oil   | ½ t onion powder        |
|   | ½ t ground cinnamon     |



### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Have your child place the grated potatoes on a large baking pan that was sprayed with a nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 350 °F for 20 minutes or until slightly tender. Do not overcook.
3. In a medium mixing bowl, have your child help add the grated potatoes, pureed garbanzo beans, green onions, vegetable oil, salt, garlic, pepper, onion powder, and cinnamon. Together, mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 40–45 minutes to make tots easier to form.
4. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
5. Using a spoon, scoop 36 tots. Talk about the shapes that you are making. Place them 1" apart on large baking sheet that was sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Lightly flatten the tops of the tots with a spoon or a fork. Bake at 400°F for 10-12 minutes or until lightly brown. Serve warm.

## Promoting *(continued from page 1)*

movements to signal that it's time for a change. For example, sing an active song with hand or body movements when moving into more active playtime.

- ♥ Be flexible. Remember that routines and schedules change as your child grows.
- ♥ Be consistent in your response to your child. When you respond positively to your crying infant, upset toddler, or curious preschooler, the familiar way you respond becomes a pattern of behavior that she learns to expect and becomes part of the routine.

This newsletter is filled with practical ideas on establishing routines with your child and age-appropriate activities that you can do at home to promote a healthy emotional growth.

## Community Resources

### American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Go to Parenting Corner page (redirected to [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)), search for topics such as “routines” or “emotional development.”

### Helpguide

<http://helpguide.org>

Their mission is to help people understand, prevent, and resolve many of life's challenges.



## Suggested Books

Recommended by Read to Me International [www.readtomeintl.org](http://www.readtomeintl.org).

For more books, visit the public library [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).



### Infants and Toddlers

#### ***Baby Bathtime!*** by DK

This charming lift-the-flap board book helps babies explore the world around them and is perfect for reading right before giving baby a bath. Colorful illustrations of bath toys welcome baby to bath time.

#### ***Goodnight, Baby*** by Innovative Kids.

When it's time for a bedtime ritual, what better way than reading a book? This board book contains delightful illustrations of farm babies ready to be tucked in for the night, and toddlers can help tuck the baby animals into slots of their matching moms.

### Preschoolers

#### ***Day Is Done*** by Peter Yarrow.

Bring calm and peace to your child's bedtime with this timeless song. The message is simple: Parents are near, and there's nothing to fear. “I am here.” An added bonus is a CD with three lovely songs by Peter Yarrow of the Peter, Paul and Mary group.

#### ***How Do Dinosaurs Eat Their Food?*** by Jane Yolen

Children will love this mischievous look at table manners and playful dinosaur antics.

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