



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Establishing Routines to Support Healthy Emotional Development

We all establish and maintain some degree of routine in our lives because it lessens stress and anxiety by creating a sense of order. A routine is a sequence of actions that are critical for a young child. They help a child build trust in the important people in her life, as they consistently provide for her needs. When a child is able to trust, she feels safe to freely explore the world around her; and that is when learning takes place.

Whether you have an infant, toddler, or preschooler, routines can be established through everyday activities. By establishing routines you are helping your child to feel safe, loved, and cared for. You are providing a climate for healthy emotional development.

The following are 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.
- ♥ Have a weekly plan. A weekly plan may include regular days for specific activities, e.g., 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 movements to signal that it's time for a change.

- ♥ 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.



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 about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

3/2/12/16

Infants

Establish routines around baby's natural rhythms of waking, eating, and sleeping—a regular pattern of caregiving. Routines help build trust and begin the process of intimate attachment. 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, this gives her a feeling of security.

The following are suggestions 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, 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.
- ♥ Be sure to talk about what you're doing during routines, For example: “I'm going to shut the lights off now.”

Activity for Infants: *Goodnight Room*

What You Need:

None

What to Do:

1. Before your child goes to bed, carry your infant around the room or the house and say “goodbye” to favorite toys, people, and objects. Each night repeat this, and eventually it will become a routine for your child to do by herself.
2. To settle baby down and get ready for bed, gently stroke her. Place your palms down on baby's chest. Gently press and stroke down to baby's toes.
3. Play soothing music or your child's favorite tunes before bed to help your infant settle down for the night.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Toddlers

As your toddler tests her independence, ability to control her body movements and language skills, keeping consistent routines may become challenging. Having routines could help limit the number of behavior challenges. 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, “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.”

Establishing and maintaining consistent routines with your toddler will contribute to her sense of pride and belonging. The following are ways to help maintain consistent routines for your toddler.

- ♥ 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 transition 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.



Activity for Toddlers: *Chore Tunes*

What You Need:
None

What to Do:

1. During wake up time, sing “Good Morning, Good Morning, Good Morning to You!” This will help her transition from sleep to waking up and getting ready for the day.
2. As your child is putting her toys away, turn on music and have her dance to the toy bin. You can also count with her the number of toys she puts away by the end of the song.
3. While your child is brushing her teeth, play music and have her brush to the rhythm of a song.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

As your child gets older, and as family circumstances change, routines also change, but your preschooler still needs the reassurance that you will respond in the same caring way to meet her needs.



Many children in this age group may be entering a child care setting for the first time so it is important to establish and maintain a routine. The following are some tips.

- ♥ Talk to your child about what will be expected. If she's going to Aunty's house, you can talk about who will drop her off, what kinds of activities she'll get to do, and when she'll get picked up.
- ♥ Each evening, get ready for the next day by having her help pick out what she would like to wear for the next day and preparing her supplies (backpack, nap items, lunch, etc.) For example, say "Do you want to wear the red or purple pants tomorrow?"
- ♥ Have a set bedtime routine such as bathing, brushing teeth, and reading a book together at the same time every night, including weekends.
- ♥ Have a set time for her to wake up, dress, eat breakfast, and leave home each morning.

Activity for Preschoolers: *Photo Routine Chart*

Adapted from: Carrotsareorange.com/

What You Need:

- Sheet of construction paper or card stock
- Colored construction paper
- Tape
- Camera or smart phone

What to Do:

1. Take photos of your child doing her daily routine. For example: reading a book, brushing her teeth, using the bathroom, saying good night to the family, etc.
2. Print your photos and have your child place the photos in the order of her routine and tape them onto the paper. Talk about the various things your child does.
3. With colored paper or construction paper, cut out check marks and place tape behind the check marks.
4. As your child completes a part of her routine, she can use a check mark to show that it is done for the day.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



How This Helps

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

Physical Development

- ♥ Develops a sense of trust
- ♥ Develops a concept of self

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop child's unique identity
- ♥ Feel important and good about oneself

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Uses language to express herself
- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develops and applies an understanding of cause-and-effect relationships
- ♥ Develops understanding of how things work



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. Remember to follow food safety guidelines when working in the kitchen: wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meats from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate food promptly.

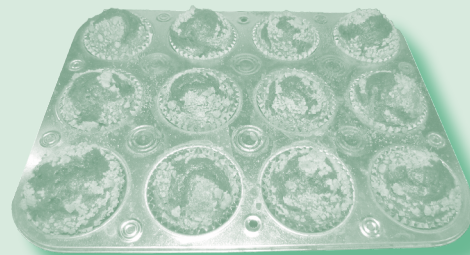
Turkey Bacon Muffin

Ingredients:

- 2 packages cornbread mix
- 2 Tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 4 strips of turkey bacon cooked, cut into pieces

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease muffin tins.
2. In a large bowl, have your child stir together the cornbread mix and the brown sugar.
3. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and milk until smooth.
4. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry corn bread mixture and ask your child to stir them together. Talk about how the mixture is changing.
5. Spoon the mixture into muffin tins until $\frac{2}{3}$ full.
6. Have your child place 6 turkey bacon pieces into each muffin tin.
7. Bake in for 14–18 minutes or until golden brown.



Community Resources

Healthy Children

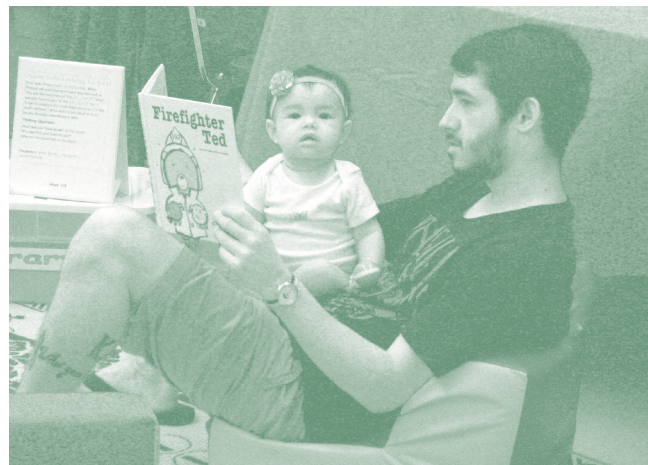
www.healthychildren.org

Search for topics such as “routines” or “emotional development.”

Extension

<https://extension.org/>

Answers to questions by university experts around the country. Search “routines” for articles and activities.



Suggested Books

Recommended by **Hawaii State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Going to Bed Book by Sandra Boynton

This bedtime story helps a child wind down before bedtime. It takes a group of animals through the routine of taking a bath, brushing their teeth, and rocking their way to sleep.

Bathtime (Touch and Feel) by DK

Let your child explore her senses with this board book full of textures: soft, bumpy, silky, and shiny. Encourage your child's language through the sound affects like, Splish, Splash! Quack Quack!

Preschoolers

The Pigeon Needs a Bath by Mo Willems

Pigeon is very hesitant to take a bath and tries to find every excuse not to take a bath, but when he finally does, he doesn't want to get out of the tub.

The Night Before Preschool by Natasha Wing

How do you help your child prepare for school? Talk with your child about going to school, reassuring her that going to school is okay. This children's book will ease your child into preschool with its rhyming word and illustrations.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowhawaii.org