

The Daily Schedule

The daily schedule blocks out time and establishes a sequence for the activities in your classroom. When the daily schedule suits the developmental and individual needs of the children, classroom life proceeds smoothly and is enjoyable for everyone. A good schedule for preschool children offers a range of different types of activities:

- active and quiet times
- large group activities, small group activities and time to play alone or with others
- indoor and outdoor playtimes
- time for children to select their own activities and for teacher-directed activities

A daily schedule establishes the consistency that helps young children to predict the sequence of events and thus to feel more secure and more in control of their day. They delight in reminding you that "snack comes next" or telling a visitor that "now we go outside". In addition, a schedule helps children to develop time concepts as they

anticipate what comes first, second, next and last.

Consistency does not preclude flexibility or spontaneity, however. Nor does it mean that the clock rules the day.

A special occurrence can be reason enough to alter the daily routine. For example, an unexpected snowfall

might inspire you and the children to pause in the middle of choice time, put on jackets and hats and go outdoors.

Similarly, on a day when children are particularly engrossed in their chosen activities, you may decide to extend choice time. keep in mind what's more important; you want children to be excited about and engaged in what they are doing. Be flexible about time when children are working well and engaged.

In putting together your schedule, start with the fixed events in the day that can't be changed. A fixed period might be lunch or the time when a shared playground is available for your class's use. Keep in mind the developmental abilities of your children. Waiting times should be kept to a minimum and adequate time should be allotted for putting on coats and hats, eating meals and snacks, and cleaning up. Work periods should be long enough to give children a chance to select materials and activities, plan what they want to do, and clean up afterward without feeling rushed.