

Overview

Use the schedule below as a guide to your day. With infants and toddlers, the time is not as important as the order of events. Predictability and consistency is key--but flexibility keeps you sane! Choose a few anchor activities to have at the same time, which is typically snack and lunch. For the rest, do not worry so much about the amount of time and go with the feel of the children and respond to their needs.

Remember, your goal is to provide connection and calm in the midst of a chaotic, new situation for these children. They are transitioning into a new setting rather quickly, so it will be rough at first. You are throwing the children a life preserver, not jumping into the turbulent waters with them--remember to take deep breaths, try to keep calm, and keep in mind that these children are doing the best they can too.

Daily rituals and routines that are predictable and familiar are key. The way you do things might be new to them, so try to be consistent from day to day. Use the outline below as a guide for the lesson plans to come.

Invitation to Play

Each day, before the children arrive, create a morning invitation to play. This might be a new material or toy, or might be something old set up in a new and exciting way. This should not take long to set up--think about five minutes maximum. One way to approach this is to put out the children's favorite toy from the day before in a new way, or in a different part of the room. Think how exciting it is to walk into a room with new books, colorful new toys, or sweet breakfast treats--it's like that, but for the playful young child's brain.

Whole Group

When all the children have arrived, or when most are present, meet as a group to sing a welcoming song. This part of the daily ritual is key--it builds connection between you and each of the children. Here are two of my favorites: [It's Good to See You Today](#) and [Willabee Wallaby Woo](#).

For whole group, keep it short and sweet. Sing a few songs including the morning greeting, read a short book, and introduce the snack and daily choices. As much as possible, use this as a morning meeting time to let the children know what to expect for the day.

Song ideas: ABCs; Twinkle Twinkle Little Star; Head Shoulders Knees and Toes; Itsy Bitsy Spider; Wheels on the Bus; Old MacDonald Had a Farm; If You're Happy and You Know it; I'm

a Little Tea Pot; This Old Man; Down by the Bay; and Five Little Monkeys. For more ideas, click [here](#)

Snack

It is important to offer food throughout the day, typically 2-3 hours apart. How you serve snack is up to you, but serving family style can make it a bonding experience and easier to manage. It is easy to dismiss children from whole group one at a time to wash hands prior to eating, and assist during the transition. Washing hands is key for young children; [here](#) is a song to help

Free Choice/Independent Play

This is a time where children can explore their environment. Independent play does not mean unsupervised, but rather gives the adults an opportunity to take care needs like diapering, general straightening up, or playing with the children on the floor. You will make sure there are some choices already pulled off the shelves or placed out ahead of time. The “plan” here is more of a guideline and an anchor for children’s exploration, but the children can freely drift into any activities that are safe/developmentally appropriate.

Movement

Singing a clean-up song can help the children learn to put toys away and transition into a more active play. Think of this as a way to burn off the extra energy before the calm of the day begins. This can be singing a song like “The Ants Go Marching,” going for a walk outside, or listening to songs like these from [Greg and Steve](#). If you have access to an outdoor playground or space to play outside, this is highly encouraged weather permitting. You can also play games like red light, green light, the freeze dance, hopscotch, or “ring around the rosy.”

Lunch

As tempting as it is to use this time to get “teacher work” done, this is a time to model how to eat lunch in a group, connect with the children, as well as support social skills like having conversations as a group. Also, because choking hazards are real, it is important to stay with the children to ensure they stay safe.

Rest

Not all children will sleep, but quiet rest time is critical. This is a new space for children, so try to make the environment as calm as possible. Play white noise or wordless music; keep the room dark as possible; try to limit movement through the room. Think of what made you feel safe and comfortable as a kid--like being tucked in, read to sleep, rocked to sleep. Consider asking

parents ahead of time how their child is supported in falling asleep, and try to stay consistent with that. When the children are resting, try to model for them what to do if they are not sleeping--sitting quietly, reading a book, and not running around the room whenever possible.

Quiet Play

As children wake up from nap/quiet time, provide choices for quiet play. This might include writing/drawing, reading books, or playing with soft toys/stuffed animals. The goal is to help kiddos transition from nap to play time, without loudly disrupting the children still sleeping.

Snack

An afternoon snack to break up the second half of the day, connect with kiddos, and give energy for the rest of the day!

Free Choice Independent Play

Same as before: This is a time where children can explore their environment. Independent play does not mean unsupervised, but rather gives the adults an opportunity to take care needs like diapering, general straightening up, or playing with the children on the floor. You will make sure there are some choices already pulled off the shelves or placed out ahead of time. The “plan” here is more of a guideline and an anchor for children’s exploration, but the children can freely drift into any activities that are safe/developmentally appropriate.

Pick Up

Try to find a way to say goodbye to children as they leave, and connect with families. They are likely feeling stressed, so be sure to connect with families by greeting them warmly when they arrive, sharing good news about their child’s day first, and approaching any troubles as a team between you/parents.