

Play-based Routine Example

Preschooler/School age Routine

Arrival – quiet play time

7:45 – 8:15 breakfast

Morning meeting following breakfast

First 90-minute block – child-led exploration and learning

9:45-10 am – hydration/nutrition break, group Storytime, check-in

Second 90-minute block – child-led exploration and learning

11:30am - 12:00 pm lunch

Calming routine, Storytime, bathroom breaks, prepare for rest time

12:30 pm – 2:30 pm rest time

Quiet transition as children awaken, put away rest materials, wash for snack

3:30 – 3:45 snack

Child-led exploration and learning: children’s interests and wonder guides their exploration in the environment in the child’s choice of activities in various learning zones such as science/sensory, math manipulatives, blocks, dramatic play, music, creative arts, reading, writing, and literature activities, and outside play.

Educator is close by as a resource, guide, co-learner and guides/invites children to engage in individual and group learning activities and experiences in all learning domains and areas (creative arts, music, math, science discovery, language and literacy, physical development, social and emotional skills, cognitive, problem-solving, etc.). Children’s activities will take place in outdoors in nature as much as possible, weather permitting, and in the indoor environment. Children are invited to join in story time/circle time during the first block which includes group discussion, manipulative game, calendar, weather, concepts.

In the 90-minute blocks, child-led exploration organically emerges along with educator-planned and directed learning experiences that children are invited to participate in.

Around the 90-minute mark, children’s minds and bodies are ready for a break and refueling. (you’ll notice them milling about, coming to adults for inspiration, or having frustrating situations with peers). They’re telling you it’s time for a break. Have a snack and beverage, do a little Storytime, maybe a little recap of the morning’s events for about 15-20 minutes. Then, send them back to their exploration and allow them to revisit their morning’s ideas or find new ideas. This is when the more complex learning often takes place.

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Infant Toddler routine:

While infants follow their own routines and we are sensitive to their individual needs, they often fall into this schedule between the fourth-sixth month of age. Following a regular routine gives infants and toddlers stability and security, helps them develop trust and independence, and promotes healthy growth and development. Generally, parents can expect:

Arrival – playtime (if the infant has eaten prior to childcare, otherwise bottle will happen when the infant indicates hunger)

Bottles and Breakfast at 8 am

Nap – 8:45 – 10 am – this is your time to do adult-led preschool activities, messy art projects...

Playtime – tummy time, baby gym, infant toys and sensory activities in an area zoned for infants and toddlers

Bottles and Lunch at 11 am

Baby plays while other children eat their lunch or sits with the group, depending on age.

Nap – 12:30 – 2:30 pm (some infants may rest from 12:00 to 3:00, it really depends on the child). This gives the educator time to regroup for the afternoon because all children are resting at the same time. We all know that it's not a perfect rest time and not all children rest or are quiet, but most days this gives everyone in the environment a chance to take a break from one another, to allow brains and bodies a chance to rest and grow, and gives the educator some much deserved time to sit down and practice a little self-care.

Bottles and Snack at 3:00 pm

Diaper changes occur as needed. Snuggles, planned activities, and child-led exploration occur throughout the day. Avoid too much “container” time. Babies need space to move limbs and grow. These products hinders motor development and impacts brain development.

The infant/toddler routine will develop as children grow and new activities become developmentally appropriate such as eating foods, grasping, crawling, walking, and becoming interested in new activities that can be adapted to their abilities. This very general routine provides a base for early educators to work towards.