

Young Toddler Program Flexible Daily Schedule

Arrivals and Departures — Caregivers work with parents to ensure that arrivals and departures are pleasant and reassuring for children. These times allow children to extend the bonds of trust they have with their parents to the caregivers in the program. The physical locations where arrivals and departures take place depend on the needs of children and their parents.

Choice Time— During this part of the daily routine, caregivers are attentive and offer emotional and physical support to children as the children play and explore their environment at their own pace. Caregivers tailor their responses to children's ideas, engage in give-and-take communication with the children, imitate children's actions, support children's play with other children, and assist children in problem solving. They also support older toddlers in planning and recalling their choice-time activities.

Group Times— In small groups of older infants and toddlers, caregivers provide a particular set of materials for children to explore in a common activity. In these group times children remain in close contact with the caregiver while having a shared experience with other children. Although the adults introduce the activities, children remain free to make choices about materials and how to use them. Adults follow the children's cues (e.g., deciding how long the activity lasts, based on children's interest levels).

Outside Time— This segment of the day allows infants and toddlers to explore the outdoor world. Using strategies similar to those used at choice time, adults support children's exploration and interests, providing open-ended materials and a variety of experiences. Young infants who are not yet crawling may spend time on a blanket lying on their backs and looking around, reaching for objects, and feeling the sun and air. Older infants sit and explore toys and natural objects, crawl, and pull themselves up to a stand. Toddlers will use the open area of the play space for a wide range of physical movements, simple games, and problem solving as they pursue their interests.

Caregiving Routines— In addition to strengthening bonds with children during meals, rest, and bodily care routines, caregivers also use these care giving routines as opportunities to share control by finding ways for the children to play an active role. Caregivers fit these times around children's exploration and play. Frequency of naps is based around each child's individual needs, with quiet alternatives provided for non-nappers. Adults also accommodate children's individual styles of waking up. Similarly, adults take cues from children about feedings and diaper changes.

Transitions — The timing of transitions is flexible, based on children's needs and engagement in their play, and the shift in events or activities should be kept low-key and comfortable. Caregivers organize the parts of the day in a logical fashion, just as one would do in one's personal routine. They strive to avoid unnecessary transitions. Instead, caregivers might schedule their daily routine so outside time occurs prior to departure time. Caregivers work with parents to ensure that arrivals and departures are pleasant and reassuring for children. These times allow children to extend the bonds of trust they have with their parents to the caregivers in the program. The physical locations where arrivals and departures take place depend on the needs of children and their parents.