



Sample Schedule

For Family Child Care

The following schedule is an example of how the daily program might be organized in a family child care home to meet the needs of children of many ages.

Early Morning

6:30-8:30 a.m. Children arrive. Your own children may be getting ready for school or to begin the day with you. Some children need breakfast. Following breakfast, infants are changed and put down to nap. ******(Children should be allowed to nap on their own schedules, so be prepared to add putting someone down for a nap within the following schedule.) Older children help with clean-up and play with table toys, read books, or listen to story tapes until everyone finishes breakfast and cleans up.

Morning Activities

8:30-9:45 a.m. Toddlers and preschool children select an activity of their choice or join in a noisy group activity such as finger painting, water play, cooking, or puppet making. As babies wake up, they are brought in to join the group activity. Children help clean up after the playtime.

9:45-10:15 a.m. Snack

10:15-11:00 a.m. Get ready to go outside: use toilet, wash hands, change diapers, and so on. Outdoor play and/or walks. Perhaps a science project such as gardening.

11:00-11:30 a.m. Free play again--perhaps a special planned activity such as making and using play dough at the kitchen table.

11:30-11:45 a.m. Clean up and story time; get ready for lunch.

Lunch and Rest

11:45-12:45 p.m. Family-style lunch and conversation. After lunch, older children help put food away and clean up. Hands are washed, diapers changed, and teeth brushed.

12:45-2:45 p.m. Everyone (except, perhaps, for a baby who has just woken up) has a rest period. Preschool children who can't sleep rest quietly on their cots or beds, looking at a book. It is reasonable to expect children to rest or play in bed quietly for 30 to 40 minutes before they are allowed to get up and begin a quiet activity. As children wake up, diapers are changed, hands are washed, and hair is combed. Cots are put away.

****** *Infants will nap two and sometimes three times a day on their own schedules, which will change as they grow. Toddlers may take one or two naps each day, often around 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Like infants, their sleep demands will change over time and may even increase and decrease at different times. It's helpful to learn the sleep schedule for each infant and then plan active and messy activities that most need your supervision when the infants are sleeping.*



Afternoon Activities

- 2:45-3:15 p.m.** Children have a snack together. School-age children arrive and help themselves to a snack of their choice. This does not mean they can eat anything that they want but rather that they should choose from a provider-approved selection. Children discuss choices for afternoon activities. Clean up follows.
- 3:15-4:00 p.m.** Activity indoor or outdoor play for all children. School-age children are invited to join in. A special project may be planned.

Late Afternoon Activities

- 4:00-4:45 p.m.** Free play: children play with table toys, blocks, crayons, read books, or build with blocks.
- 4:45-5:00 p.m.** Group story time or singing (non-disruptive play for those who do not wish to participate in the group); quiet group activity.
- 5:00-6:00 p.m.** Children go home at staggered times. Projects are assembled, diapers changed, and parents information made ready. Children color, look at books, play with table toys until their parents arrive. Events of the day and plans for the next day are discussed with children and parents as they leave.

Allowing for Flexibility



Although your daily schedule can help organize the day, you don't want it to limit your ability to be spontaneous and flexible. For example, if it is a particularly beautiful day, you may want to spend most of the day outdoors. Or if a child starts dancing to a record you have put on during free play, you might lead a group movement activity.

Throughout the day, unplanned events often occur that offer "teachable moments," unexpected learning opportunities. A sudden thunderstorm, or the discovery of a cocoon, or a new litter of puppies in the neighborhood may arouse the children's curiosity. When the mail or a delivery arrives, you can talk about different jobs people have in the community or discuss the idea that letters go in and

out of the mailbox. Watch the children's activities and listen to their conversation and questions. You'll discover many such teachable moments.

Routines

Daily routines such as diapering, mealtimes, and rest times are as much a part of your program as the activities you plan for children. Giving some thought to how you want to handle routines will help make these daily activities more enjoyable for you and the children, as well as opportunities for learning.