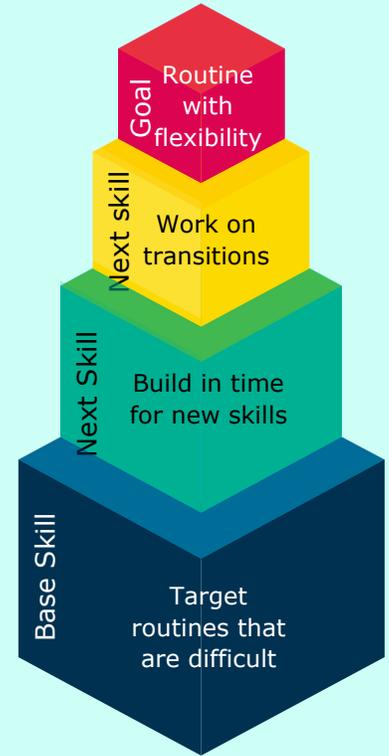




A STEP AHEAD

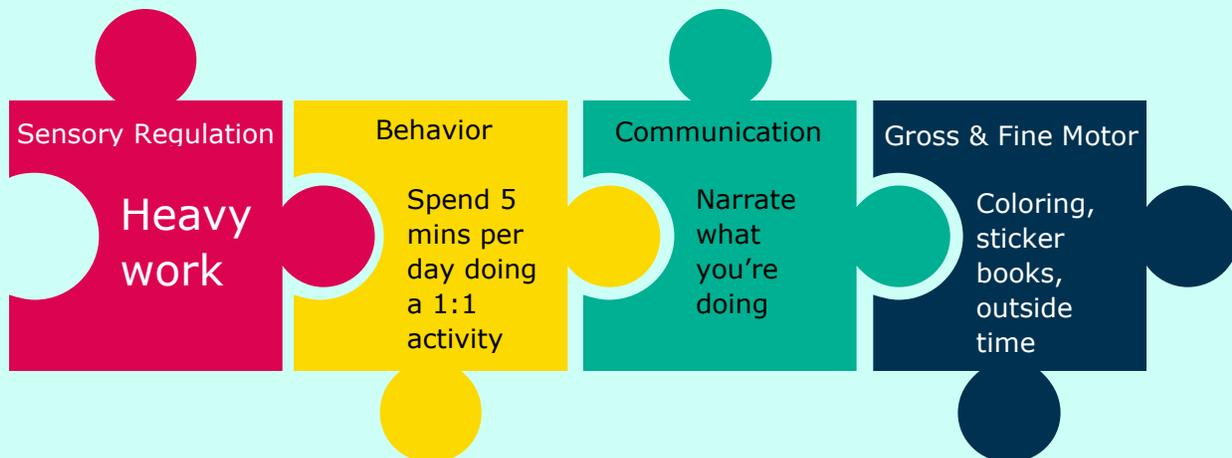
Routines: The Basics

Routines help children feel safe and secure by helping them know what to expect. They can also help reduce meltdowns and build confidence.



Why it's important to start early: Routines help infants learn the difference between night and day. You can start introducing a bedtime routine around two months. It's best to keep it simple (book, pajamas, bath, feeding) and short (20-30 minutes). Longer routines can cause infants to get overstimulated and you may have to start over. Learning what works best for them takes time and patience. You may not get a daily routine right the first time and it will likely change often with age. You may notice big changes during growth spurts around 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months. Reading the child's cues will help guide you to create the best routine for your family.

Is it too late? How to implement with toddlers: It's never too late to start a routine with children. For children in childcare settings it can be helpful to adapt a similar schedule at home for consistency. Remember this routine can change over time and is meant to have flexibility for doctor appointments, visits, and unexpected trips to the store. It is important to expect push back from your toddler if they are not used to a routine. Providing warnings or telling them what to expect for the day will be helpful.



Routines can include:

- Mealtimes
- Nap times
- Outside play
- Transitions
- Skill building
- Arts and crafts
- Helping with chores
- Heavy work
- Independent play time
- Predictable errands (groceries)

Troubleshooting tips:

Wake windows are guidelines for how long a child can stay awake without getting overtired

Providing warnings before transitions and choices during can allow the child to prepare and feel more in control

References:

<https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/social/establishing-toddler-routines/>

<https://www.babycentre.co.uk/a1051918/seven-steps-to-creating-a-successful-baby-routine>

Sample routine for a toddler:

6:45 a.m. Wake up, play in the crib or your bed

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:00 a.m. Get dressed, brush teeth

8:30 a.m. Read books and play

10:30 a.m. Morning snack

11:00 a.m. Arts and crafts

11:30 a.m. Listen to music

12:00 p.m. Lunch and cleanup

12:30 p.m. Naptime

2:30 p.m. Afternoon snack

3:00 p.m. Outdoor play/walk

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:00 p.m. Playtime and cleanup

7:00 p.m. Have a bath/brush teeth

7:30 p.m. Pajamas, story time, lullabies

8:15 p.m. Bedtime

Resources:

Understanding wake windows/sample schedules:

<https://takingcarababies.com/nap-schedules/>

Heavy work ideas:

<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/25-heavy-work-activities-kids.html>

Benefits of routines:

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/223-creating-routines-for-love-and-learning>