

Teaching and Learning

Under 2's - Getting the routine right



“All of us benefit from having a sense of purpose and some structure in our lives. We feel more comfortable knowing when we might eat, sleep, work and play, and young children are no different, although their needs are different. Having good routines in place provides a sense of security for children and promotes wellbeing. Routines also support the development of positive parent/child relationships.”

Health for Under 5's

TASK 1

What happens at home:

A day in the life of the infant in a setting, is likely to look quite different to that of a day in the life of the infant at home. It is therefore important that you work closely with parents and carers to better understand what the home life routine looks like. This will enable you to streamline your individualised approach for the infant's routine on the days they join you at your setting.

The following link includes some great talking points for you to use with parents to gather information.

[Why routines matter | Toddler | Health for Under 5s](#)

After consulting parents, be sure to feedback how this will inform the care and learning routine that you will put in place for their child.

TASK 2

Individualised approach:

If left to themselves, a baby will naturally develop their own routine of eating, sleeping and wakeful playtimes. This will change according to growth and development spurts.

Between one and two years old, children's development continues at pace. They're emerging as little people with very definite likes and dislikes and are also starting to develop an awareness of themselves as individuals. The frustration they sometimes feel may start to be expressed through more challenging behaviours. Having clear routines can go some way to helping both of you manage this.

Using the short case studies below, consider how the child's needs are being impacted by the routine:

- It's time to go outside and the children are lining up to make the journey downstairs to the garden area. Athena is trying to put on her wellington boots independently and is therefore taking a little more time. Staff are keen to minimise children waiting and so put on her boots for her.
- Hassam is sharing a story with his key person in the book corner. He becomes sleepy and starts yawning. Dinner is about to be served, so he is encouraged to stay awake and reassured that he can nap after eating. He becomes upset and doesn't eat his meal.
- Lily struggles with separating from mum in the morning when she arrives at nursery. She normally arrives once circle time has started and will become upset when encouraged to join in. Her key person decided to instead give Lily a 'job' to do in the morning. So, when she arrives, she knows that she is going to help get the breakfast ready for her friends.

- Astrid is painting outside. She has been covering one of the large boxes in red paint and explained to the adult that she is making a fire engine. It is now time to go inside, but Astrid wants to finish. The adult offers to give 5 more minutes of painting time, but after that, they will need to return inside. After 5 minutes, Astrid still isn't finished. The adult suggests that they take the activity inside, so that she can finish.
- An adult has taken Cameron to the bathroom to use the potty. The adult is leading the morning activity and needs to get back to the room so they can start. The child struggles with toileting and takes a while. The adult sits with him and sings songs and rhymes until he is finished. They then return to the room and the adult begins a shorter adult led activity than initially planned.

- Reflect on the levels of flexibility shown in each of the scenarios.
- Were the children's needs being met?
- Did the child's needs take precedent over the routine or vice versa?
- Did the adult support the child to move through the routine?
- Was the child's 'voice' heard?
- How could the scenarios have been managed differently – and what would the impact have been on the child and others?
- Do you recognise any similar scenarios within your existing routine? How might this be improved?

“A daily routine gives your baby a blueprint of what to expect. This way, they'll be less resistant to going to sleep and less frantic about their next feeding. A daily routine with your baby should strike a balance between schedules and flexibility.”

TASK 3

Utilising care routine:

An infant's day is so heavily influenced by their basic care needs and ensuring that they are met. It would therefore be remiss of us to not recognise how best we can use these care routines to have meaningful interactions and to provide stimulating and engaging opportunities.

Explore the following Q cards that take a deeper dive into different parts of a care routine and be sure to make a note of any areas for development in your existing routine.

- Nappy changing, Healthy living section.
- Under 2's - Quality sleep, Healthy living section.
- Under 2's - Baby weaning, Healthy living section.
- Under 2's – Bottle fed babies, Safeguarding section.
- Tummy time – Areas of learning, Physical section.
- Making mealtimes social – Healthy living section.
- Relaxation and mindfulness – Healthy living section
- Food and mood – Healthy living section.
- Encouraging independence – Teaching and learning section.

Further reading

[The Benefits of Routines for Babies and Toddlers - BabySparks](#)

[Creating Routines for Love and Learning | ZERO TO THREE](#)

[Importance of routine for young children | eyworks](#)