

TIP SHEET

Shift Routine Best Practices



As a volunteer working with early childhood groups, you play a vital role in supporting the development and well-being of young children. Group routines provide structure and predictability, which are essential for creating a safe and nurturing environment. Here are some tips to help you effectively engage with children during group routines.

Establish a Consistent Schedule

- Create predictable routines for activities such as arrival, playtime, and departure.
- Consistency helps children feel secure and understand what to expect, reducing anxiety and challenging behaviors.

Use Visual and Auditory Cues

- Use visual aids, such as pictures or charts, to illustrate the daily schedule and transition between activities.
- Visual cues help young children understand what comes next and promote independence in following routines.

Keep It Simple

- Keep instructions clear, concise, and age-appropriate, using simple language and gestures to support understanding.
- Break down tasks into small steps and provide one direction at a time to help children follow along.

Encourage Participation

- Encourage children to participate in group activities by inviting them to join in songs, or movements.
- Offer choices whenever possible to empower children and promote autonomy in decision-making.

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Provide Transition Warnings

- Give advance warning before transitioning to a new activity, using verbal cues, visual timers, chimes, or songs to signal upcoming changes
- Transition warnings help children prepare mentally and emotionally for shifts in routine, reducing stress and resistance

Model Positive Behavior

- Model positive behavior and social skills during group activities, such as taking turns, sharing, and listening attentively.
- Use praise and encouragement to reinforce desired behaviors and motivate children to participate actively.

Be Flexible and Responsive

- Remain flexible and responsive to the needs and interests of individual children, adapting routines as necessary to accommodate their preferences and developmental levels.
- Pay attention to cues such as body language and verbal expressions to gauge children's engagement and adjust your approach accordingly.

Foster a Sense of Belonging, Collaboration and Teamwork

- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment where children feel valued, respected, and included in the group.
- Use positive language and affirmations to acknowledge each child's contributions and celebrate their uniqueness.
- Encourage collaboration and teamwork among children during group activities, promoting cooperation, communication, and problem-solving skills.

By implementing these tips, you can create a positive and supportive environment where children feel safe, engaged, and empowered to learn and grow through play. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to supporting the Playspace Program.