

## **Infant/Toddler Daily Routine – “A Walk Through the Day”**

Activities, time and space make up the framework for the experiences of the young child’s day. An overly structured, rigid schedule will leave staff and children feeling frustrated and confined. A schedule that is too loosely planned might cause anxiety and confusion.

**Structure the day in a balanced way to provide familiar, predictable experiences and flexible, changes experiences. Use the following guidelines:**

- 1. Be “child-centered.”**
  - Go slowly.
  - Encourage and support children as they are developmentally ready for new activities and routines.
- 2. Allow children to experience active roles in daily activities in order to build feelings of “I can do it.”**
  - Eating
  - Dressing
  - Hand washing
  - Napping
- 3. Give children choices in play.**
- 4. Speak words of Jesus’ love often through various activities.**
  - Examples: “Look at the pretty day God made for us.” “Do you hear the cardinal singing? Thank you, God, for all birds.” “We’re so happy Jesus loves us.”
- 5. Remember that infants/toddlers are sensory-motor beings. Plan your infant/toddler environment to maximize the following:**
  - **Spiritual development** through exposure to “Jesus” stories and “Jesus” songs
  - **Sensory activities** through exploration of textures, colors, sounds, size, shapes, smells, tastes and weights
  - **Language skills** through conversations, books, music, rhyming and sound exploration
  - **Social experiences** through child and caregiver interaction guiding and modeling
  - **Large- and small-motor experiences** by having infants look, reach, grasp, hold and crawl in, out, under and over: by having toddlers grip, throw, handle, walk, climb, pull and push
  - **Cognitive experiences** through spatial relationships, object permanence, classifying, collecting and dumping, cause and effect and problem solving
  - **Creative expressive experiences** through art, movement, doll and soft-toy play, imitation and beginning dramatic play

**A Daily Routine for Infants/Toddlers specifically includes:**

- **Hellos and Good-Byes**
  - Greet children and parents warmly by name
  - Provide predictable transition routines

- **Diapering and Toileting**
  - Talk to the child
  - Sing
  - Post schedules for diapering/toileting children
  - Chart diapering and toileting information (every 2 hours for each child)
  - Hang posters reminding caregivers of sanitary diapering/toileting and hand washing procedures
- **Mealtime**
  - Sit with children during meal/snack time
  - Converse with children
  - Model good manners
  - Include prayers before meals/snacks
- **Nap Time**
  - Have a nap routine (songs, a blessing – “May Jesus bless you as you rest,” etc.)
  - Play quiet music
  - Provide hugs and gentle touches
  - Treat children gently and talk softly as they awaken
  - Provide quiet play experiences for early risers
- **Group Time for Older Infants/Toddlers**
  - The age of the children will determine the length of group time
  - No child should be forced to sit in group time
  - Incorporate finger plays, songs, Bible stories
  - Extend group time through sensory experiences, art projects, large- and small-motor activities
- **Floor Time**
  - Provide exposure to various sensory materials, books and activities
  - Provide a variety of sensory experiences under close supervision (paint, edible play dough, etc.)
  - Include simple songs and finger plays
  - Change activities every few minutes (follow the child’s lead)
- **Outdoor Walks and Activities**
  - Let them enjoy fresh air, touch grass/trees, a walk after it rains (dirt, mud)
  - Toddlers can enjoy painting with water, using sidewalk chalk
  - Help toddlers learn to ride a tricycle; roll, kick or throw a ball
- **Daily Transitions**
  - Provide a predictable routine
  - Explain what you are going to do
  - Reassure them that everything will be okay
  - Let them know if they may come back to an activity they are enjoying

### **Another Transition – Moving a child from the Infant Room to the Toddler Room**

A possible transition schedule would be to allow an older infant two or three weeks to become adjusted to the new staff, children and room

- Week #1: Have the transitioning infant in the toddler room from the morning (at arrival) through lunch time.
- Week #2: Have the infant stay in the toddler room through lunch, introducing her to napping on a cot and joining in the afternoon snack.
- Week #3: The infant remains in the toddler room.