



Pre – School Home Learning
Setting Routines Starter Pack

The Importance of Routine

The Benefits of Routine

All children like routine. In a busy world with lots to do, understand and learn about a regular routine can provide:

-Comfort and Security. As children become familiar and feel safe within their environment, they build trust in the people who care for them and become secure as they learn about the sequence of their day.

-A Healthy Life Style. With regular routines, a child's natural body clock can begin to form regular habits including: eating, toileting, sleep and rest.

- Predictability a routine provides **Reduces Distress and Anxiety** making day-day activities more manageable and new learning possible.

- Practising the same skills, again and again, as part of a daily routine can promote **Self-Esteem, Confidence and Increased Independence.**



Setting Routines



Establishing Routines

-Start by building routines around your family's everyday needs e.g. Feeding, Care Skills (comfort, changing, bathing, dressing), Exercise, Sleep, Rest and Play.







-Be Consistent. Consistency and repetition are really important, but be prepared for some flexibility i.e. try to build routines around activities rather than worrying about sticking rigidly to set times. This will make it a bit easier to be flexible when events or appointments crop up, or it's 'a bit of an off day' when things just don't go to plan.

-Be realistic about what you and your child can achieve. Every child's focus and attention will vary and every family's daily commitments differ. Don't try to cram too much into a day. Young children can easily become over stimulated and tired leading to upset and distress.

-Remember to include time to play! Children learn through play. Life can be busy and it is easy to get distracted. Look for opportunities at various points of the day to give your child 5-10 minutes of your attention to play. Children will be more likely to have fun and interact if play is regular, for short periods of time, undisturbed and interesting to the child.

Helping children become familiar with routines

You can help your child to begin to recognise routines by:

- ✓ Thinking about the environmental cues you offer your child and keep them consistent, where possible i.e. opening the high chair at the table before every mealtime; turning off the T.V before play, collecting a nappy and wipes before changing, diming lights at bed time etc. 
- ✓ Always use language in routines. Begin with set words or phrases e.g. 'Morning'; Nappy changed; 'Dressed' 'Eat' 'Play' 'Bath'. 
- ✓ Show a visual object to help your child understand the spoken language e.g. A nappy for 'nappy changed'; a favourite plate or bowl to 'eat'; a rubber duck for 'bath'; cup for 'drink'; blanket at 'bedtime' etc. 
- ✓ Increase your use of facial expressions and gestures (*used with spoken language*) to communicate your message e.g. pointing when you refer to something, rubbing eyes when talking about feeling sleepy; 'using' a steering wheel to indicate you are going in the car. (*If you have previous experience of sign-a-long, regular signing will help children recognise signs in context and increase communication skills.*) 
- ✓ Singing specific songs can help children predict regular routines and encourage participation. 
'This is the way we 'brush our teeth'
- ✓ Using a timetable. Some children will enjoy looking at photographs and pictures. With guidance from the Speech and Language Therapist and lot of practise, photographs and pictures can be beneficial in supporting children to make and express choices and can be used to create a visual timetable to support participation in routines. *Even if your child is still not yet ready for a visual timetable, a timetable can be helpful in supporting adults to stay focused and keep important routines in a child's life consistent.* 

For more information on implementing any of the strategies above, please speak to your Speech and Language Therapist or PSHTS Key Worker.

What a routine might look like for you and your family?

See example or try creating your own visual timetable that best reflects your family.

(NB - Timetables are useful and a good option to keep families on track. To make sure a visual timetable has the best chance of success when used with small children please speak to your Speech and Therapist for advice on the best time and steps to take in introducing visuals.)

Example of how events and cues used everyday, often without thinking about it, can help children to become familiar and feel secure in knowing what is happening and predict what is coming next.

	Morning Routine			
<i>Cues</i>	<i>Blinds Open</i>	<i>Wardrobe Doors open with a soft bang everyday</i>	<i>You carry your child into the kitchen and put them a table.</i>	<i>You clean up the child and place them on a play mat.</i>
<i>Key Language</i>	<i>'Morning'</i>	<i>'Clothes On'</i>	<i>'Breakfast Time'</i>	<i>'Playtime'</i>
<i>Objects</i>	<i>Show Face Cloth (Wash)</i>	<i>You hold up clothes as you speak</i>	<i>You show the child a cup of milk – it's a cup you often give them.</i>	<i>You bring out a favourite toy or toy box.</i>
<i>Song</i>	<i>As you wash, you choose to sing. 'This is the way we wash our face'</i>	<i>You use familiar quotes while dressing without thinking about it 'reach for the sky.'</i>	<i>You use statements 'All Done'</i>	<i>You sing a play song; nursery rhymes; theme tunes to favourite characters.</i>

Daily Routine - Example (Every family's needs will be different, if you would like support in setting a routine, please speak to your Health Visitor, Speech and Language Therapist or PSHTS Key-Worker)

Morning	Mid-Morning	Lunch	Mid Afternoon	Dinner	Bath	Bed
Up Washed Dressed Breakfast	Play Snack Changed Nap	Washed Lunch Walk / Garden	Play Quiet time (Story, Music, Cbeebies etc)	Dinner Cuddle/People Games	Bath Wash Bath -Play P'J's On	Water Teeth – Brushed Story or Rhymes Cuddle In

