

#	Age & Stage	Theme	Title
14	25-30 months	Routines	Did you know routines are important to help young children develop a healthy brain?

Young children thrive on routines. They function best when they know what to expect and when to expect it. Develop a healthy daily pattern for your child starting from birth.

- ◆ Everyday routines like waking up in the morning, getting dressed, having breakfast, going to daycare and returning home, family dinner time, bath time, reading time and bed time, will give your child stability. They will help your child feel secure. When children are calm and relaxed, they are able to focus on learning.
- ◆ Find a routine which works for all the members of your family. Make sure individual differences and needs are taken into consideration. For example, a single parent may find it easier to put the youngest child to bed first and then have special one-on-one time with an older child.
- ◆ Routines also reduce discipline issues. If a young child knows that bath time is always followed by story time and by a good night kiss, they are less likely to resist and will be more ready to sleep.
- ◆ Help make transitions easier for the children. For example, let your child know that you will be leaving the playground once you have climbed together one more time to the top of the tower. Once you have stated that, stick to it! Also, you can add a song to certain tasks such as picking up the toys.
- ◆ Family mealtime is an important part of a healthy family routine. It is a time to connect as a family. As you interact and discuss things together, you are teaching your toddler social skills and literacy. It's a chance for your toddler to bond with siblings and the whole family.
- ◆ Be ready to change the routine if it is not working. For example, your toddler may be too tired to pick up all the toys before dinner. It may be best to pick up some toys earlier, just before having a snack.
- ◆ It is best to minimize the amount of screen time for young children. For 2-4 year olds, a maximum of one hour a day of screen time is advised. This includes watching TV and playing with computer or video games. Too much time in front of the TV can delay brain and language development.
- ◆ Sleep is also crucial to a young child's brain development. Make sure your child has a safe, comfortable and quiet place to sleep. Try to keep a regular sleep schedule. Although every child is different, on average, toddlers need 10 to 13 hours of sleep per day.

Links

- ◆ *Family Routines*. FRP Canada. www.welcomehere.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=673
- ◆ *Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the Early Years (0-4 years)*. Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP-InfoSheets-ENG-Early-Years-FINAL.pdf
- ◆ *Healthy Sleep for Your Baby and Child*. Canadian Paediatric Society. www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy_sleep_for_your_baby_and_child