

ROUTINES & PROCEDURES FOR 3 AND 4-YEAR-OLDS

Establishing consistent routines helps young children feel safe, build independence, and develop positive behaviors. The following guidelines support parents in creating structure at home.

Morning Routine

- Wake up at the same time each day
- Use simple steps: bathroom, get dressed, eat breakfast
- Offer limited choices (e.g., pick between two outfits)

Mealtime Procedures

- Set regular meal and snack times
- Encourage children to sit at the table during meals
- Promote self-feeding and basic table manners

Play and Learning Time

- Include both structured (guided activities) and unstructured play
- Rotate toys to maintain interest
- Encourage clean-up with clear expectations (“clean up before new activity”)

Transitions

- Give warnings before changes (e.g., “5 more minutes”)
- Use visual or verbal cues to signal transitions
- Keep instructions simple and consistent

Behavior Expectations

- Set clear, simple rules (e.g., “use gentle hands”),
- Praise positive behavior immediately
- Be consistent with consequences

Bedtime Routine

- Keep a consistent bedtime
- Follow a calming sequence: bath, book, bed
- Avoid screens at least 30–60 minutes before sleep

Independence Skills

- Encourage dressing, handwashing, and picking up toys
- Allow extra time for children to try tasks on their own
- Provide support but avoid doing tasks for them when possible

Consistency and patience are key. Predictable routines help children feel secure and support emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Link to support family routines and procedures:

<https://tinyurl.com/mrrrzmnna>

