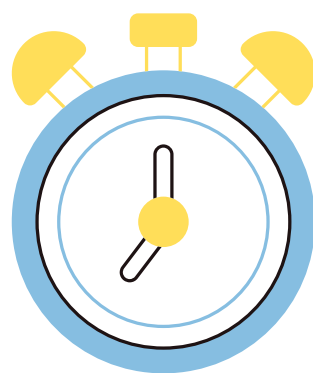


# THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUTINES FOR CHILDREN

## *Tips for Families*

### WHY ROUTINES MATTER

Research shows that routines support healthy social-emotional development in early childhood. In particular, children with regular routines at home have stronger self-regulation skills. Young children who learn to do this well are better able to adapt to everyday challenges, stressors, and new expectations.



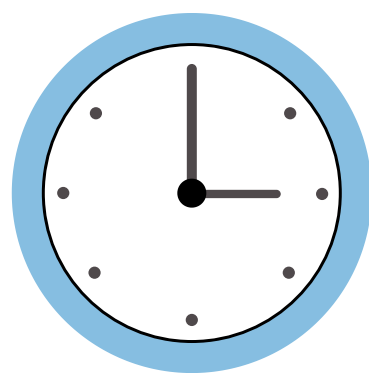
### KEEPING IT PREDICTABLE

Routines require a particular set of characteristics for children to be most developmentally supportive: predictability and accessibility. Children benefit from relationships and environments that are predictable to them: this includes important caregivers who behave in predictable ways, and events that occur at predictable times.

## Here are some tips:

### ROUTINES AND RULES

One way to do this is by creating a schedule. However, for some children, overly defined schedules may increase anxiety, especially if the transitions between segments seem artificial. If you find a schedule is not working for your family, try a morning meeting during which priorities are set for the day and general timeframes are created for blocks of activity.



### RELATIONSHIPS

Children don't need perfect parents to thrive, but they do need predictable parents. Their development is best supported by fewer but more focused moments of positive interaction than attempts at sustaining distracted attention throughout the day.

### RITUALS

Many families already have rituals in place without realizing their power: Taco Tuesdays, Sunday church services, and Saturday movie nights. It is key that they occur at the same time and place, that they involve all family members, and that they impart a positive emotional connection. Research shows that rituals buffer the impact of stress and trauma on mental health.



### Guidance for Pediatric Providers:

When talking to caregivers and families, it may be helpful to share [Building Structure](#) as this provides guidance on creating structure for children.