

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Routine Matters

Routines help children feel safe and understand expectations, while also fostering independence, learning and positive relationships.

These tips offer guidance on how to create, maintain, and adapt routines that honour the needs of the child and support you in creating a nurturing, calm and structured environment.



1. **Consistency:** Create a daily timetable that children can learn and anticipate, helping them feel secure and know what comes next
2. **Transitions:** Give children warnings that activities will change, for example, “In five minutes we will get ready to ____”. Use songs, claps, music or visuals to signal transitions
3. **Flexibility:** Acknowledge individual needs and be flexible enough to accommodate them. While structure is important, leaving room for spontaneity will enhance the children's experiences
4. **Foster relationships:** Use routines such as feeding or nappy changing to bond with children, offering individual attention. Demonstrate respect by asking permission to change a child's nappy or wet clothes
5. **Encourage independence:** Involve children in routines, for example, setting the table at lunch time, pouring the water at snack time, tidying up before story time, etc
6. **Communicate with parents:** Inform parents about the routines in the nursery. They may choose to reinforce them at home to create a cohesive experience for their children. Let parents know about any changes you observe and encourage parents to do the same
7. **Safety:** Ensure that routines prioritise safety, e.g. all equipment regularly inspected, and any anomalies dealt with immediately
8. **Reflect and adapt:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of routines and be ready to make changes based on children's responses, needs, or feedback from parents or colleagues. Encourage feedback from children too in order to continually improve.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Online course – [Child development: Birth to five years](#)
- Online course - [Terrific Two Year Olds](#)
- Online course – [Your essential guide to working with children under three](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna