

The Nurturing Nest Family Child Care Daily Schedule

A daily schedule helps children learn the order of their day. Young children like to know that they can depend on certain daily routines. This helps them feel secure. When I say things like, “after nap we will have an afternoon snack”, children learn what to expect. The daily schedule also helps me organize my day and plan a good balance of activities and experiences for the children.

Please keep in mind that this schedule was developed to accommodate children of various age groups. Some children have their own internal schedules. Babies need to be fed, changed, and put to rest on demand. Children of differing ages have different needs, interests, and attention spans. School-age children have to deal with school and teachers as well. It’s sometimes a wonder that any of the day proceeds as planned, yet for all the reasons mentioned above, planning is vitally important. It’s what ensured that everyone, including myself, has a productive day.

Time	Activity
7:00am	Arrival/Free Play Children arrive at staggered times. They can choose any activity until it is time to clean up for breakfast.
8:30am	Breakfast Family-style breakfast and conversation. Following breakfast, infants are changed and put down to nap. (Infants and young toddlers will be allowed to nap on their own schedules.) Older children help with clean up and play with table toys, read books, or listen to story tapes until everyone finishes breakfast and cleans up.
9:00am	Morning Activity Time Toddlers and preschool children select an activity of their choice or join in a noisy group activity such as finger painting, water play, cooking, or puppet making. As babies wake up, they are brought in to join the group activity. Children help clean up after the playtime.
10:15am	Outside Time Get ready to go outside: use the toilet, wash hands, change diapers, and so on. Outdoor play and/or walks.
11:00am	Educational TV/Free play Free play again – perhaps a special planned activity such as making and using playdough at the kitchen table.

11:30am	Story Time Clean up and story time; get ready for lunch.
11:45am	Lunch Family style lunch and conversation. After lunch, older children help put food away and clean up. Hands are washed and diapers changed.
12:45pm	Nap/Quiet Time Everyone (except, perhaps, for a baby who has just woken up) has a rest period. Preschool children, who can't sleep, rest quietly on their mat looking at a book. It is reasonable to expect children to rest or play in bed quietly for 30 minutes before they are allowed to get up and begin a quiet activity. As children wake up, diapers are changed and hands are washed. Mats are put away.
2:45pm	Snack Children have a snack together. Children discuss choices for afternoon activities. Clean up follows.
3:15pm	Afternoon Activity Time Active indoor or outdoor play for all children. A special project may be planned.
4:00pm	Music & Movement Group singing time (nondisruptive play for those who do not wish to participate in the groups); quiet group activity.
4:30pm	Departure Children go home at staggered times. Projects are assembled, diapers changed, and parent information made ready. Children color, look at books, or play with table toys until their parents arrive. Events of the day and plans for the next day are discussed with children and parents as they leave.

Although the daily schedule helps us organize the day, we don't want it to limit our ability to be spontaneous and flexible. For example, if it is a particularly beautiful day, we may want to spend most of the day outdoors. Or if a child starts dancing to a CD I have put on during free play, I may want to lead the group in a movement activity.