

Learning Links' Tip Sheet

Strategies for helping children follow routines in group settings



- ∞ Routines and transition times are an important part of life, especially in child care settings and schools. Children learn skills such as self help skills, independence, sequencing and how to act appropriately in a group by taking part in routines. Children who are experiencing difficulties should be helped to follow through completely with all routines as it is an invaluable learning experience for them.
- ∞ Preparation is essential – children need time to finish what they are doing before needing to move on e.g. visual and time cues to pack away such as a picture and sand-timer.
- ∞ Make sure that the routine is well known to all children. A visual timetable at eye level is very helpful.
- ∞ Discuss what will happen. For example, say, “We are going to the bathroom to wash our hands. Find a basin then turn on the taps. Rub the soap onto your hands and make bubbles. Wash off the soap, turn off the tap and dry your hands.”
- ∞ Use a picture or series of pictures that illustrates the routine. Use objects, simple photos, pictures or line drawings to illustrate each step.
- ∞ Make up a song that incorporates the steps of a routine.
- ∞ If possible, ask children who are capable to help you discuss what happens next in the sequence.
- ∞ Some children will need to be physically taken through the whole routine by an adult to ensure that they follow the correct sequence and complete all parts, including being taken to a mat or table at the end.
- ∞ If it is expected that at the end of a routine the children are to be sitting down in a group or at a table, then this should be considered part of the routine and included in the picture sequence.
- ∞ Make routines as smooth and as calm as possible and minimise distractions.
- ∞ Move only small groups of children at a time to complete a routine.
- ∞ Make routine times fun. Sing a song or play a game that fits in with your routine; for example, ‘This is the way we wash our hands’ when going to the bathroom or ‘Five Current Buns’ when going to morning tea.

The information in Learning Links' Tip Sheets is prepared by experienced early childhood professionals. Each child is unique and this material is not necessarily suitable for every child, parent or carer. We recommend you discuss this information with your child's therapist or education professional prior to using these tips.



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