



Routines: Context for Learning

As WV Birth to Three partners with families and caregivers, this guidance is provided to strengthen the child's understanding, learning and access to family and community activities.

All learning occurs through a child's interactions and experiences. For a typically developing child this mostly, this occurs incidentally and without effort as information flows through our distance senses of vision and hearing...The Gateway to Learning. Sensory challenges turns this learning upside down. Information becomes incomplete, distorted or unreliable and directly affects learning and development. Consistent structured routines provide a predictable context and offer the opportunities to develop communication, skills, and concepts and to develop relationships. They are concrete experiences that provide the order on which the child can build on, connect their own experiences, and build concepts.

Components of a Routine: The level of learning in a routine is proportionate to the level of the active engagement of the child.



Beginning.....Middle.....End

Beginning:

- Does the child know who will be participating in the routine with them?
- Does the child know which routine will occur? Have a name for each routine.
- Can the child assist in the preparation of the routine?

Examples:

Hearing Loss- Introduce yourself to the child in their communication modality. For children using/learning sign language have a name sign for yourself. Ensure AT is operational and presence is inside their "listening bubble". Have a name for the routine and explain what he/she will be doing or where he/she is going. Ensure understanding via picture and/or pantomime (while adding words/signs). Label and expand language and concepts via explanations. "First we need to run the water. Can you feel how warm the water is? Let's get a towel and washcloth from the top shelf."

Vison Loss- Ensure the child knows who you are. Speak before you act on the child. Explain to the child what he/she will be doing or where he/she is going. Consider providing an object cue. Object cue should be an object (or partial object) that tactically represent the routine such as a washcloth for bath or a hard plastic that feels like the car seat. Through verbal narratives, gentle prompts and/or hand-under-hand, have the child prepare for the activity. Ensure visual accommodations are provided. Red toothbrush if that is the preferred color.

Combined Loss- Ensure the child know who you are; consider a consistently worn ring that the child can use to recognize you via touch, your name sign, always use your voice. Ensure

understanding of the routine. Use an object of the routine such as washcloth for bathing or spoon for eating, sign/voice to the child what the routine will be. Use hand-under-hand assist in gather materials or turning on the water for a bath, use verbal/sign descriptions of preparation.

Middle:

- How can the child increase participation in routine?
- Can new skills and concepts that naturally occur during the routine be introduced?
- What learned skills can the child demonstrate (generalize) in this different routine?

Examples:

Hearing Loss-Provide language and concept expansion in the child's communication modality. Ensure AT is operational and presence is inside their "listening bubble". During bath time, talk about wet vs dry, warm vs cool water, how the soap suds up and rinses clean. Always consider the new language skills and concepts that can be learned in the familiarity of a routine. Where are opportunities to introduce new words and concepts?

Vision Loss- If the child has low vision, look for ways to add color or high contrast to items you and the child use routinely. If part of his/her dinner routine is to feed herself using a spoon, make sure she has a spoon and bowl she can easily see on her highchair tray. If your child is blind or has very low vision, think about ways to add textures or braille to items she uses. If part of her morning routine includes brushing her hair, buy her a brush that has a distinctive handle that lets her know it's hers. Provide opportunities for exploring tactual components of relevant objects and promote discrimination of objects by touch. Provide items that have a variety of textures, shapes, sizes, and weight. Look for items that have many different ways to activate them such as pushing, pulling, sliding, pinching, etc. Encourage children who have low vision to use their vision by controlling environmental conditions such as lighting and glare, color, contrast, size, etc. Allow the child to hold materials at whatever angle or distance that is best for them and encourage them to move close to you at story time.

Combined Loss- Use touch cues, hand-under-hand assist, verbal/sign and physical prompts to maximize the child's participation. Consider what new skills and concepts can be built upon in the familiar context of a routine. How can engagement, turn taking and mutual attention be increased?

End:

- Does the child know the routine in complete?
- Can the child participate in the clean up or end of the routine?

Examples:

Hearing Loss- Provide language and concept expansion in the child's communication modality. Ensure AT is operational and presence is inside their "listening bubble". Have a consistent word/sign to indicate the routine is finished. As the child's participates in the "clean up" or end of the routine, consider the new language skills and concepts that can be learned. Where are opportunities to introduce new words and concepts? Prepositions such as "in" "out"; "up" "down"; "over" "under" and concepts such as "dirty" "clean"; "cold" "warm" are more easily understood in context of an enjoyable activity.

Vision Loss-Speak before you act on the child. Explain to the child that we are finished and have a concluding ritual such as rinsing the washcloth and hanging it on the side of the tub. Through verbal narratives, gentle prompts and/or hand-under-hand, encourage the child to assist in the finishing activities.

Combined Loss- Use hand-under-hand assist, verbal/sign and physical prompts to maximize the child's participation in the ending ritual such as draining the water after a bath or participating in the putting the snacks away. Place objects used during the routine in the child's finish box to indicate the activity is over.

Consideration Tips:

- Learning skills and concepts in their natural context attaches more meaning to content of what is learned and helps the child to retain the skills and concepts and helps the child generalize the skills and concepts to other situations.
- The routine can be “talked” about using symbols, sign language, objects or whatever the targeted mode of communication is, out of context-distant in time and place.
- Always use your words paired with the targeted mode of communication.
- Accessible to blind and visually impaired incorporates objects, parts of objects, tactile symbols that are used as labels.
- Routines can be used to integrate skills, concepts and adaptations in a meaningful way.
- There is a clear signal to the child that the activity is starting. The steps of the activity occur in the same sequence.
- Each step is done the same way each time (same materials, same person, same place).
- Assistance is given in the same way each time until the child is ready for a lower level of prompting.
- The pacing of instruction is precisely maintained until the activity is finished (no side conversations, no going to get something you forgot, or spontaneously adding new or different steps that won't happen the next time the activity is done).
- There is a clear signal to the student that the activity is finished.
- When you see that the child is anticipating what will happen next, you'll know you've succeeded in establishing a routine.

Always Think: From the child's perspective what natural incidental information would typically occur that the child can be supported to access.

For children with visual impairments:

Concept development is delayed because vision is what drives the typically developing infant to move and interact with objects. When vision is impaired, often this drive is also impaired. Babies with visual impairments do not handle objects in the same way that babies without visual impairments do. They do not explore the environment the same way. They also do not see the actions of others well or at all. They cannot rely on vision to give them information to the same extent that babies with no visual impairment can. Vision also allows one to see how one piece of the world relates to several other pieces of the world. Children with visual impairments have to view their world piece by piece; then put it all together into the big picture. Children with no visual impairment can see the big picture first; then look at the pieces; then go back to the big picture. For example, a child with no vision loss will see that I am holding a rattle. She will look at the rattle and at me, and she gets the picture.

For children with hearing loss:

Watch the child and listen to yourself as you carry them out. What is the most natural language to go with each action? How do you give your baby access to that language? Do you make sure that the hearing aids or cochlear implant are on and working and that the television is turned off until the routine is over, or that brothers and sisters take their conversation into another room, or better yet — join you in the routine? Do you have the child’s attention? Are you within the child’s listening bubble?

Remember to:

- accept the child’s responses and then increase expectations;
- encourage responses appropriate to the routine and the natural environment;
- encourage contingent responding related to child’s initiation;
- focus on increasing the child’s frequency and independence of responding; and,
- use "encouragers" rather than rewards.

Tips for Success for children with hearing loss-language expansion/exposure:

Routine:	Natural Language:	Providing Access:
Going for a walk	“Go outside”; “Let’s walk”; “Ride in in stroller”; “Put on your jacket, shoes”; “Look at the bird”	Use the family’s chosen communication mode; show your baby the stroller, jacket and shoes, point at the bird or object you are taking about