

Routines Age 1 Summary

Why Routines?

As a parent or someone in a parenting role, you play an essential role in your child's success. There are intentional ways to grow a healthy parent-child relationship, and daily routines provide a perfect opportunity.

STEP

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Getting to Know and Understand Your Infant's Input

- Consider your routines throughout the day—morning, midday, and bedtime. Creating routines around wake-up time, mealtime, naptime, and bedtime can make these times predictable, comforting, and fun for your child.
 - When you greet your child first thing in the morning, you could use a smile or phrase like “Good Morning, my little sunshine.”
 - You could incorporate singing songs when changing their diapers or putting them in the crib for an afternoon nap.
- Consider how your child reacts when they engage in routines and when their routines change.
 - Do they get upset, angry, or frustrated? How do they show you? Children this age may cry, yell, hit, bite, or throw things. They can still be soothed by cuddling and rocking and learn to self-soothe when upset.
 - Consider how your child reacts when they are happy or excited. How do they show you? Children at this age clap their hands, imitate others, smile, squeal, and laugh when they are happy or excited.
 - Consider how your child reacts when they are scared. How do they show you? Children at this age are more aware of their surroundings, which can make them afraid of new things or sounds. They may cry, withdraw, or hide.

Tip: Your child will give you many cues about whether the routines you develop feel too complicated or too simple and if they are followed consistently enough for your child to feel secure. Every child is different, and your child may change daily depending on how willing they are to follow a routine or how much help they need to manage planned and unplanned routine changes.

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2****Teach New Skills**

- Narrate your daily routines. As you prepare breakfast at home or go shopping together at the store, talk about what you are doing each step of the way. Involve your child by asking questions. For example, “I am getting out your favorite cereal bowl. I think we’ll have some cereal this morning. Does that sound yummy to you?”
- Narrate your feelings. As you are going through your bedtime routine, talk about what you are doing each step of the way. Involve your child by asking questions. For example, you might say, “I just yawned and am feeling sleepy. Do you think I should take a nap?”
- Read and pretend play together. Use reading time and select a book of faces to help your child learn to identify the different feelings of other children. Point out what you notice and how you can tell each child is feeling each feeling. Do the children’s feelings change based on their experiences in the book?
- Grow confidence. In addition to having consistent daily routines with your child, point out when they are following the routine. “I noticed that you helped me to pick up the toys before dinner. That is what we always do before dinnertime.”
- If your child seems worried about a change and is using verbal or non-verbal language, you may respond with:
 - “This is something different, but I know we can do it. I will be right beside you.”
 - “I would love to hold your hand when we try this new activity.”

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3****Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits**

- Learn about your child’s development. Each new age presents challenges, and being informed about your child’s developmental milestones promotes empathy and patience.
- Engage in routines together, like picking up toys before snacktime or hanging up your coats when you come inside. Allow your child to engage with you in routines.
- Consider how you can model examples of routines so they can learn what they are. “I like to put my coat on a hanger in the closet. Let’s put your coat right beside mine?”

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4****Support Your Child’s Development and Success**

- Label your work with statements like, “We are putting the block into the box. This is part of our clean-up routine.”

- Don't move on quickly if your child shows interest in trying something new. Children often need more time to stick with a challenge or pursue a goal. Be sure to wait long enough for your child to show you they are competent. Your waiting could make all the difference in whether they can gain skills over time.
- Recognize effort using "I notice..." statements like: "I noticed how you were able to take your socks off before your bath."
- Actively reflect on how your child feels when they have completed a step in your routine or are facing a change. You can offer reflections like, "I see you are helping me to pick up our toys as part of our clean-up routine." Naming their success will help them grow in confidence.

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Recognize Efforts

- Recognize and call out when things are going well. It may seem obvious, but it's easy not to notice when everything moves smoothly. Noticing and naming the behavior provides the necessary reinforcement that you see and value your child's choice.
- Recognize small steps along the way. Don't wait for significant accomplishments—like the full bedtime routine going smoothly—to recognize effort. Remember that your recognition can work as a tool to promote more positive behaviors. Find small ways your child is making an effort and let them know you see them.
- Build celebrations into your routine. For example, snuggle and read before bed after getting through your bedtime routine.

Trap: It can be easy to resort to bribes when recognition and occasional rewards are underutilized. If parents or those in a parenting role frequently resort to bribes, it is likely time to revisit the five-step process.

Trap: Think about what behavior a bribe may unintentionally reinforce. For example, offering a sucker if a child stops a tantrum in the grocery store checkout line may teach the child that future tantrums lead to additional treats.

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