Environment: Schedules & Routines

Consistent and familiar activities that happen around the same time and in a similar way each day provide a sense of security and predictability to young children. They help build trust so children can experience and practice communication throughout their day and in a variety of activities.

Schedules

■ Use the PC Strategies to talk about the series of activities that will take place throughout the day. Refer to the daily schedule often. "First we will read books, and then we will have a snack."

■ Refer to things that happened in the past as you talk about the daily schedule. "Remember, yesterday we went outside after naptime."

> To help children who are learning the primary language of your classroom or children who do not understand many words, create a visual schedule with pictures. For younger children, or for children just learning about schedules, you can have a two-picture schedule, showing what is happening now and what is happening next.

Center Tips

✓ Plan a general schedule that all caregivers are aware of and follow

✓ Build flexibility into the schedule to respond to individual child needs

✓ Create familiar routines all caregivers in the room can follow

✓ Talk about the activities of the day and what is happening next with the children

Routines

■ Establish familiar routines to help children anticipate, prepare for, and talk about upcoming activities. For example, plan a naptime routine around "books, cuddles, and bed." The routine may include the use of some clearly marked opener/closer, such as a song.

■ Build in routines throughout that day that are familiar and predictable, even if your day does not follow its usual schedule.

■ Introduce surprises during routine care activities such as diapering and dressing. Place clothing items in silly or unexpected places, such as placing a mitten on the child's foot, or a shoe on the child's hand. Ask, "Is this where we put the mitten?" This is likely to draw comments from the child and keep the child interested in the activity.

Environment

Organize and plan to promote communication & interaction

SCHOOL