THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Quality Teaching and Learning

PRESENTER NOTES
SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES

This guide walks you through presenting ***Managing the Classroom: Schedules and Routines***. These are suggestions so please use the materials as you see fit. This in-service suite includes PowerPoint slides and supporting materials.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter PowerPoint slides (16)
- Optional slides: (6)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
  - » *Your Classroom Schedule*
  - » *Developing a Routine*
- Optional Learning Activities:
  - » *My Day*
  - » *Group Problem Solving*
  - » *Schedule Analysis*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper, and markers for writing participant ideas.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to introduce one feature of a well-organized classroom—the use of a daily schedule and established routines.
- This is one in a series of in-service suites on how to create a well-organized classroom.
- We know from research that daily schedules and established routines are important because they influence a child's social and emotional development.
- Learning activities offer participants opportunities to write a schedule and develop a routine.
- Optional Learning Activities and slides are described in detail at the end of this document.

NOTE

The focus of this in-service suite is the *daily classroom schedule*, not schedules for the week or month.

SLIDE 1:
SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES

Introductions:

- Begin the training session by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Offer an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves and provide an icebreaker activity. One idea is to ask participants to raise their hands if they typically map out a schedule for their day or week. For those that answer yes, follow up by asking them why a schedule is helpful to them and the people with whom they share most of their time.

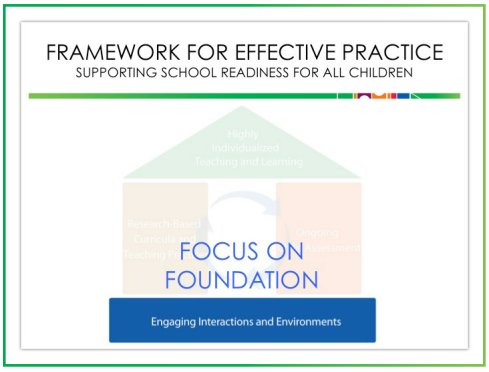
SLIDE 1 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Introduce the topic:

- The focus of this presentation is the importance of using a schedule and developing consistent routines. A consistent classroom schedule and established routines provide predictability and a sense of well-being that enables children to learn.

The terms *routines* and *schedules* are often used interchangeably. However, they are two different concepts and will be defined later in the session.



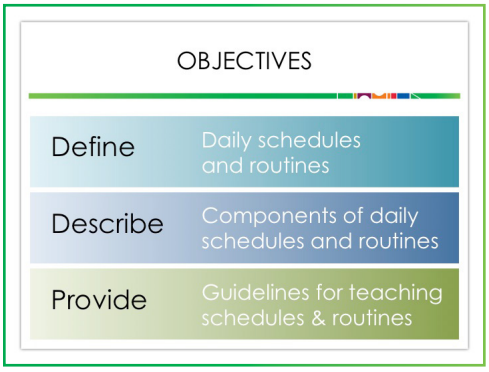
SLIDE 2:
FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Review NCQTL framework for effective practice:

- The House structure supports school readiness for all children.
- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All components interact with each other and are essential for effective everyday practice for all children.

Schedules and Routines fits into the foundation of the House. The foundation of the House represents the fundamental elements of quality preschool practice. These include a well-organized and managed classroom, positive emotional support, and meaningful teacher-child interactions that support children's development and learning.

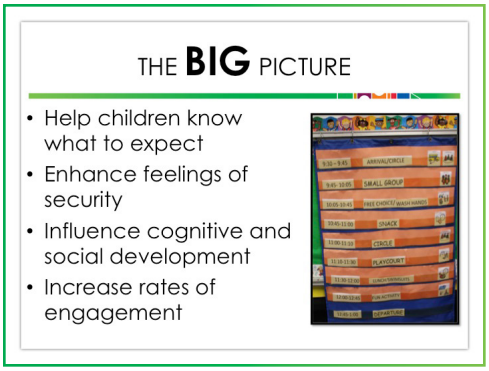
- One feature of a well-organized classroom is the use of a schedule and established routines.
- Schedules and established routines are important because they influence a child's social and emotional development.



SLIDE 3:
OBJECTIVES

There are three objectives for this presentation:

- First, we'll define daily schedule and established routines.
- Next, we'll describe the components of a daily schedule and routines.
- Finally, we'll provide guidelines for teaching schedules and routines.



SLIDE 4:
THE BIG PICTURE

Let's begin by looking into why it is important to have schedules.

When we think about schedules for children, we think about times and locations of daily activities. On weekdays, children may be playing at home, riding the bus, or drawing at preschool. On weekends, children may be cuddling at home, visiting relatives, traveling, or helping out with grocery shopping or yard work.

For the school day, schedules …

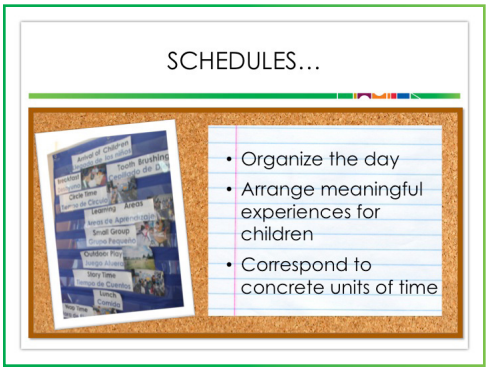
- *Help* children know what to expect:
  - » Schedules and routines help children understand the expectations of the classroom environment—which may be very different than in other settings.
  - » Knowing expectations may lower behavior problems.
- *Enhance* feelings of security:
  - » Predictable and consistent schedules in preschool classrooms help children feel secure and comfortable.
  - » Those children who have difficulty with change especially need to feel secure.
  - » Children who do not yet speak and understand English well also benefit from predictable and consistent classroom schedules and routines.
- *Influence* a child's cognitive and social development:
  - » When periods of play are longer, children engage in more complex social and cognitive play.
- *Increase* child engagement rates:
  - » Child engagement is defined as the amount of time a child spends interacting with his or her environment (adults, peers, or materials) in a developmentally and contextually appropriate manner, at different levels of competence.
  - » Schedules that give children choices, balanced activities, planned activities, and individual activities result in a higher level of engagement.

The BIG picture is that schedules help children to feel safe so that they can develop and learn.

OPTIONAL

LEARNING ACTIVITY: MY DAY

Before discussing the importance of schedule, consider having participants reflect on the role of schedules and routines in their own lives.



SLIDE 5: SCHEDULES…

DISCUSSION

As a large group or think-pair-share activity, discuss the following:

What are important things to consider when you develop a schedule for a preschool classroom?

Ask participants to share some comments with the large group. Possible aspects to highlight:

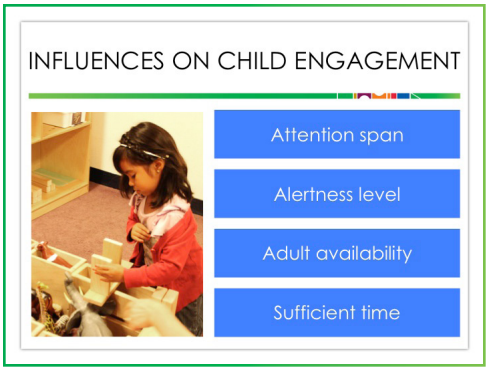
- Main activities and routines
- Balance between different types of activities
- Allow for some flexibility
- Duration may vary for different activities
- Include time for choices

Schedules define the whole day, whereas routines are more specific sets of regularly occurring behaviors.

- Schedules organize the day.
- Schedules arrange meaningful experiences for children.
- Schedules represent the big picture, the main activities to be completed daily.
- Schedules consist of activities that divide the day into concrete units of time.

This slide shows an example of a schedule:

- This is a schedule from arrival to nap time.
- There are meaningful experiences on the schedule.
- The schedule represents the BIG picture.
- *Some* routines are listed on this schedule.



SLIDE 6:
INFLUENCES ON CHILD ENGAGEMENT

One of the main reasons for developing schedules is that schedules promote engagement and success in the classroom. Several factors influence child engagement.

Attention span of children:

- Plan activities to maximize children's engagement:
  - » Use other adults to assist.
  - » Use novel materials.
  - » Limit duration to ensure children stay engaged throughout the activity.

Alertness level:

- Plan activities that require more child attention and listening skills during times when children are more alert.
- Plan calming activities after active activities.
- Note if some children may be tired or sick.

Adult availability:

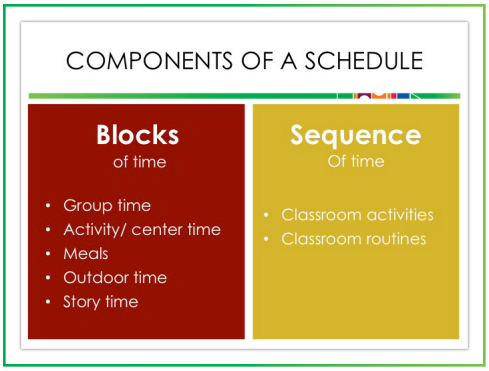
- For a more active part of your day, you may want to have more adults to support the children's learning and the management of the classroom.

Time for children's needs—allow enough time for children to fully engage and benefit from an activity. When children engage in longer periods of play they:

- Show higher levels of exploration, experimentation, and persistence.
- Utilize materials in more creative ways.
- Develop social relationships.

NOTE

The schedule may need to take into consideration that certain activities may involve projects that span several days or even weeks.



SLIDE 7:
COMPONENTS OF A SCHEDULE

What are the components that are included when developing schedules?

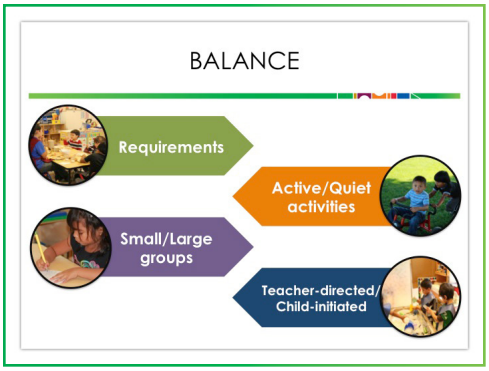
The first component is "blocks of time," the big chunks of time set aside for classroom activities.

- Preschool schedules typically include:
  - » Group or circle time
  - » Activity or center time
  - » Snack time and meals
  - » Outdoor time
  - » Story time

The next component is the sequence. Sequencing the blocks of time requires taking into consideration multiple factors including:

- Method of arrival/departure (bus or transportation provided by families)
- Schedules of other classrooms (e.g., which classroom goes outdoors at what times?)

Schedules include some of the daily routines such as meal times, but may not include others such as bathroom breaks or clean up routines.



SLIDE 8:
BALANCE

There may be some other considerations to take into account when developing a daily schedule.

Program requirements:

- Consider other things that are particular to your program/center—the "givens" such as:
  - » Scheduled times, such as outdoor time, mealtime, etc.

Active/quiet activities:

- Alternate active with quiet activities to help children with self-control.

Small/large group:

- Have a mix of small group and large group activities.

Teacher-directed/child-initiated:

- Have a mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.

Additional suggestions:

- Have activities that differ in noise level, pace, person leading (child vs. adult), and location (indoor vs. outdoor).
- Plan ahead. What will the schedule look like if children are unable to play outdoors?
- Be in tune with children's needs/engagement levels and be flexible—shorten or lengthen blocks of time as needed.

SLIDE 9:
EXAMPLES OF SCHEDULES

Here are some examples of preschool classroom schedules:

- This is an example of an all day schedule.
- Notice that this schedule is labeled, "The Story of Our Day."
- This schedule uses commercially prepared pictures.

NOTE

Share additional examples of individualized schedules.

Show Optional Slides 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 after Slide 9.

In order for all children to fully participate in learning, schedules may need to be individualized. The Optional Slides have some examples.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Ask participants to discuss how these schedules reflect the guidelines of best practice for designing daily schedules. For example, only major events are listed, a balance of activities across the day is shown and some routines are included, but others are not.

Conclude with these points:

- An effective daily schedule is simple and includes major events that occur during the class day.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
YOUR CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

This activity provides participants with the opportunity to develop and discuss a classroom schedule.

Divide the participants into teaching teams or small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute the handout *Your Classroom Schedule*. Review directions:

- Teaching teams write a schedule on the chart.
- Teams/groups discuss how the schedule aligns with the guidelines discussed for developing a schedule.
- What changes, if any, would they make and why?

Walk around the room and check in for questions or concerns. Have teams share their responses. Record answers, if desired.

Length of video: Approximately 54 seconds

SLIDE 10:
VIDEO: TEACHING THE DAILY SCHEDULE

This video, *Teaching The Daily Schedule*, is an example of how one teacher utilizes the daily schedule with children. This video clip was taken at a center that has several classrooms. Each classroom gets to use the gym once a week. In this classroom they substitute gym time for their learning centers once a week.

VIDEO

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Discuss which teaching strategies are implemented in this video for teaching a daily schedule. Record comments, if desired.

NOTE

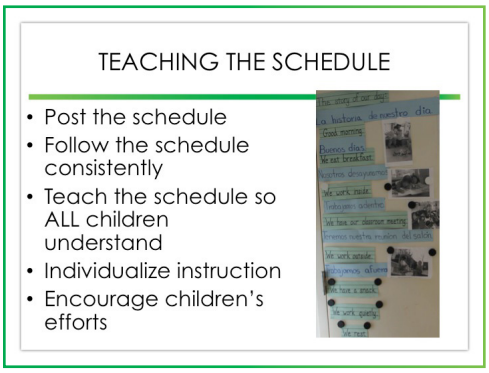
The following points may be highlighted when discussing the video. The schedule is relevant and functional:

- The teacher changes the schedule (this particular day is "gym day" which happens on Tuesdays).

The teacher uses visual cues to teach the schedule:

- The teacher points to schedule.
- Removing the sentence strip is a visual cue that signals that the activity is finished.

The teacher encourages and provides positive feedback to children.



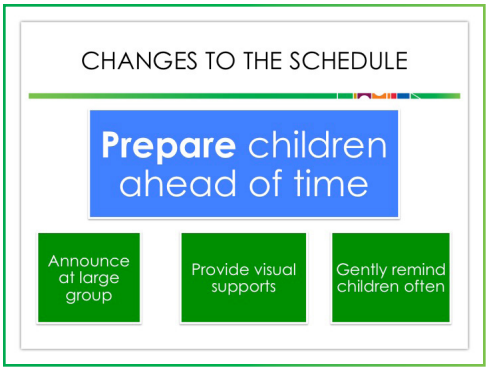
SLIDE 11:
TEACHING THE SCHEDULE

Some suggestions for teaching the daily schedule are:

- Post your schedule, and refer to it frequently throughout the day so children learn what is next on the schedule.
- Follow the schedule. Be consistent with your schedule and routines. Children are more likely to learn to follow a schedule if it is implemented consistently.
- Teach the schedule using visual cues so that all children understand. Put the visual cues on the schedule itself. For example, the visual cues can be photos of children or pictures.
- Provide individual instruction to children who need more assistance, and use individualized picture cues.
- Encourage children's efforts to follow schedules.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Ask participants for examples of how they have taught schedules to children. Record, if desired.



SLIDE 12:
CHANGES TO THE SCHEDULE

Allow for flexibility when creating the schedule. Changes may be due to planned or unplanned circumstances.
A few reasons: a change in staffing, available materials, or weather.

When changes are necessary, prepare children for those changes:

- Make announcements at large group time.
- Use visual prompts on a posted schedule indicating a change (e.g., a stop sign on top of an activity that is not going to happen as planned).
- Gently remind children about the changes as often as possible.

NOTE

For some children with disabilities (e.g., autism), changes in the schedule or routine can be a trigger for challenging behaviors.

OPTIONAL

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING

This activity provides participants with an opportunity to discuss using visual supports to teach children to follow the daily schedule.

OPTIONAL

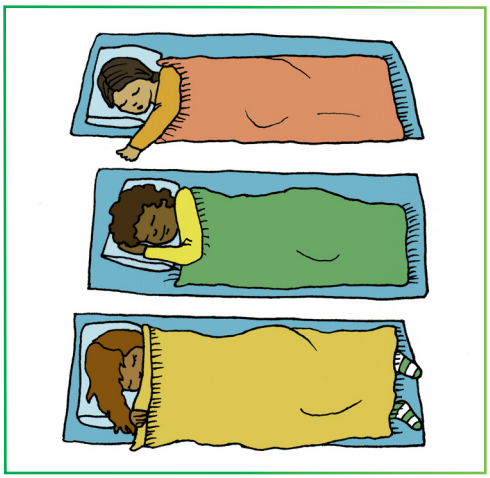
LEARNING ACTIVITY:
SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

This activity provides participants with an opportunity to review guidelines for designing classroom schedules and discuss their possible impact on children's behaviors.

SLIDE 13:
ROUTINES

The terms *routines* and *schedules* are often used interchangeably. Routines provide some security and a sense of what comes next; children are able to anticipate what will happen, and thus feel more secure. This is especially important for children whose primary language differs from that spoken in the classroom and children who have difficulty with change. Here we define "routine."

- Routines are activities and procedures that *occur regularly.*
- Routines often involve a *series of behaviors*. These behaviors are repeated *each time* the routine is completed.
  - » When children arrive in the morning they may sign in, put away their book bags, hang up their coats, and then begin a morning activity.
- Include such activities as clean-up, meal times, arrival/departure, etc.



LEARNING ACTIVITY:
DEVELOPING A ROUTINE

This activity provides participants with practice in identifying series of behaviors (or mini-schedules) that make up a routine.

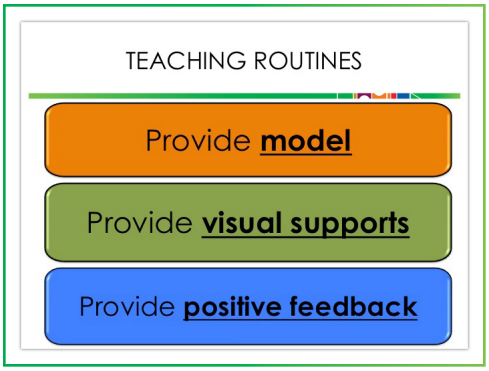
Divide the participants into teaching teams or small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute and review the handout *Developing a Routine*.

- Teaching teams select a routine and write the steps and possible visuals to support the routine.
- Remind teams to consider the developmental level of the children in their class when brainstorming possible visual supports (e.g., words vs. pictures vs. objects).

Walk around the room and check in for questions or concerns. Have teams share their responses. Record answers if desired.

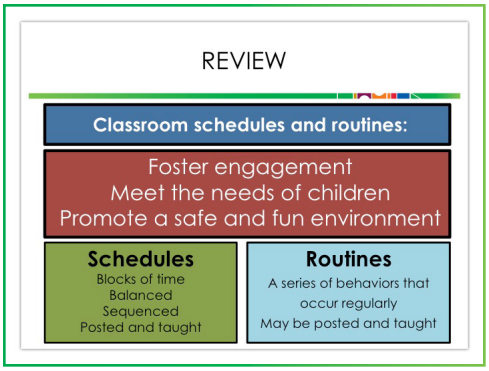


SLIDE 14:
TEACHING ROUTINES

We can't expect children to follow the expectations of a routine if we don't teach it to them and provide opportunities to practice with feedback and support.

- To teach the expectations of a routine:
  - » Model the procedures for children. Modeling the procedure could include the teacher modeling and/or children modeling for their classmates.
  - » Picture supports that illustrate the steps of the routine help to teach the routine and remind children of the steps as they are learning and practicing independently. Visual supports need to be where children can see them when they are practicing the routine. For example, place the arrival routine reminder close to the door at the child's eye level.

- As children follow the steps of the routine, provide positive feedback:
  - » If there are multiple steps, provide positive feedback on the steps that were completed correctly and reminders of any missed steps or behaviors. For example, if a child misses a step of the arrival routine, you could say, "Juan, you did a great job of putting away your book bag and choosing a center. Remember, you need to sign in when you arrive."



SLIDE 15:
REVIEW

Let's review by starting with the big picture.

Schedules and routines are utilized in preschool classrooms to:

- Foster engagement.
- Meet the needs of children to explore, persist, elaborate.
- Promote a safe and fun place to learn and grow.

The components of a daily schedule are:

- Blocks of time for activities—the amount of time for each block will vary and should be flexible.
- These blocks of time are then balanced in terms of active/quiet, small/large group, and teacher-directed/child-initiated activities.
- Activities are listed in an orderly sequence.
- Finally, the schedule is posted and taught. Refer to the schedule often and recognize when children use the schedule.

Routines are:

- A series of behaviors that occur on a regular basis
- Routines may be posted—this provides a visual reminder for children.
- Expectations for routines need to be planned and then taught to children.

OPTIONAL CLOSING DISCUSSION

Ask for any questions, comments, or concerns about schedules and routines.

HANDOUT

Distribute handouts (if not distributed during presentation).

Based on participant roles:

- Distribute and review *Tips for Teachers* handout.
- Distribute and review *Tools for Supervisors*—a guided observation.
- Distribute *Helpful Resources* list—further information about schedules and routines for classroom staff and/or supervisors.

SLIDE 16:
CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources.

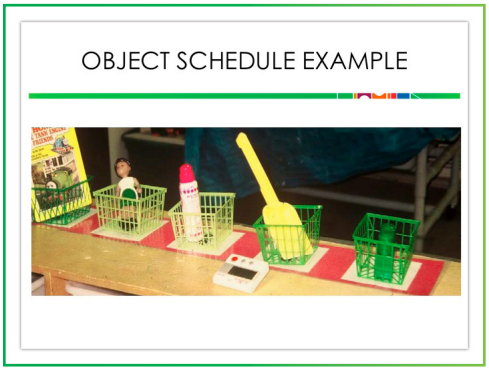
Potential follow-up activities:

- Ask participants to observe children to determine if the current classroom schedule meets children's needs and then make changes as appropriate. Invite participants to send/e-mail a copy to you or to a colleague.
- Ask participants to analyze routines and make sure that all staff members know and follow the steps.
- *Letter to Myself.* Give participants some stationery and an envelope or a post card. Have them address the envelope and write a letter to themselves indicating what they plan to do as a result of the workshop. Collect the letters and mail them to participants 4–6 weeks after training.

OPTIONAL SLIDE 1:
OPTIONAL SLIDES: EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUALIZED SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES

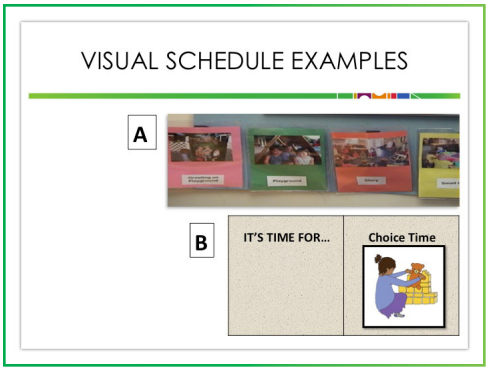
Suggested placement for all six optional slides is after Slide 9.

Following are additional examples of visual supports and mini-schedules to help teachers consider the educational needs of individual children when designing schedules and developing routines.



OPTIONAL SLIDE 2:
OBJECT SCHEDULE EXAMPLE

- Object schedules may be helpful for children who are Dual Language Learners or who have special learning needs.
- Teachers might keep the objects in a compartmentalized container—in order of the schedule—then show the object to an individual child prior to the next activity in the schedule.



OPTIONAL SLIDE 3:
VISUAL SCHEDULE EXAMPLES

These two examples can be used with children with special needs.

- **A:** This visual schedule is designed for a single child. Each portion of the day is defined with pictures of the activity. The pictures are fastened with Velcro for flexibility. This schedule is designed so that a child can carry the schedule from activity to activity. A schedule like this may also be useful for a child who is a Dual Language Learner.
- **B:** This example of a visual schedule is intended for use by an individual child. Pictures are on Velcro and change at each transition. The Head Start Center for Inclusion developed this schedule and the materials are available on their web site at http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/.

OPTIONAL SLIDE 4:
MINI-SCHEDULE

This FIRST/THEN schedule combines a routine and a schedule for a morning meeting during circle time.

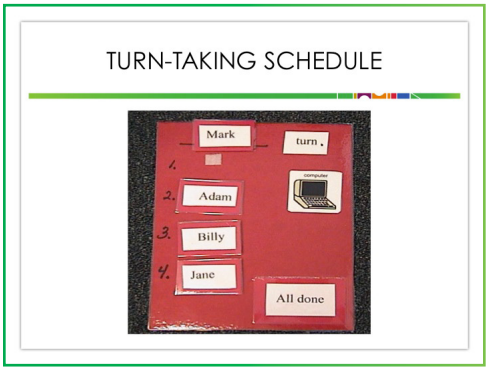
- Components of the morning meeting routine are pictured, laminated, and put on Velcro.
- The routine for morning meeting is the same each day.
  - » Sing a morning/opening song.
  - » Take attendance.
  - » Review the schedule for the day.
  - » Sing a song about feelings.
  - » Review classroom rules.
  - » Discuss the calendar.
  - » Talk about the weather.
  - » Follow the Leader (a transition activity).
- In this case the child must FIRST participate in the morning meeting and THEN go to small group.
- The mini-schedule could be stored in a small individual binder.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Ask participants "What are some other uses that you could have for mini-schedules?" Write answers on poster paper, if desired.

OPTIONAL SLIDE 5:
HAND WASHING: DETAILED STEPS

- This detailed example for hand washing may be used in the classroom.
- The use of pictures of an actual child may make this routine more easily understood by all children, in particular by children who are Dual Language Learners.
- The words in the steps could be written in the home languages of children in the classroom.



OPTIONAL SLIDE 6:
TURN-TAKING SCHEDULE

- This example illustrates another use of schedules. This schedule serves as an organizer for taking turns to use the computer.
- An individual child places their name at the top of the sheet.
- When that child completes their turn, their name goes in the "ALL DONE" pocket and the next name is put at the top.

OPTIONAL

LEARNING ACTIVITY: MY DAY

Suggested placement before discussing Slide 4.

The purpose of this activity is to have participants explore the role of schedules and routines in their own lives.

HANDOUT

Distribute and review the *My Day* handout.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share their insights and comments regarding the role of schedules and routines.

Some possible questions:

- What is the same/different about a workday and a non-work day?
- Why do you organize your life the way you do?
- What parts of your day might be considered routine?
- How do you feel when your schedule/routine changes?
- How does this activity relate to children in the preschool classroom?

OPTIONAL

LEARNING ACTIVITY: GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING

Suggested placement after Slide 12.

This activity provides participants with an opportunity to discuss using visual supports to teach children to follow the daily schedule.

Divide participants into small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute and review the handout *Group Problem Solving*.

- Assign each group one or more of the scenarios.
- Have groups brainstorm answers to the questions provided.

Walk around the room and check in for questions or concerns. Have teams share their scenarios and solutions with the whole group.

OPTIONAL

LEARNING ACTIVITY: SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Suggested placement after Slide 12.

This activity provides participants with an opportunity to review guidelines for designing classroom schedules and discuss their possible impact on children's behaviors.

Divide participants into small groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute and review the handout *Schedule Analysis*.

- Ask participants to discuss the questions on their handouts.

Walk around the room and check in for questions or concerns. Have teams share their conclusions with the whole group.

This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0002 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning.
FALL 2012