

DRAFT DAILY SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12 MONTHS OF AGE

Many babies are ready for a very flexible schedule at around 6 weeks of age. Feedings and morning and afternoon naps get more regular as your baby grows and develops. In fact, the more you respond to your baby's on-demand needs (such as feeding her when she lets you know she's hungry, holding her when she's upset, or putting her down for a nap when she shows you she is tired), the easier it is for your baby to settle into a regular schedule. Using familiar routines based on your baby's needs can help you and your baby develop a flexible schedule. The following sample daily schedule can be adapted to meet your baby's individual needs. Remember, your baby is growing at her own pace, so this schedule is flexible and can be changed.

6–8 A.M. EARLY MORNING ROUTINES AND FEEDING

- Good morning families. Start your day by thinking about the things that make you feel better, such as songs, family meals, prayers, hugs, or seeing the world through your baby's eyes. Do them often. Caring for yourself is equally important to caring for your baby.

8–10 A.M. ON-DEMAND FEEDING AND DIAPERING; PLAY AND EXPLORATION

- Use feeding and diapering time to talk with your baby or play simple games. Talking to your baby is a great way for her to learn words.
- As your older infant is ready for solids, let her practice feeding herself with her own spoon while you feed her pureed or mashed solids from another spoon. Even if she doesn't get any food in her mouth on her own, it's good practice for when she's older.
- Work in some tummy/floor time for your baby to stretch and explore simple toys and materials such as rattles, stacking cups, big spoons, board books, and other items that are safe for babies to put in their mouths.
- Use words while playing with your baby. Pause and let her talk back to you with her coos and other noises, facial expressions, and body movement.

10–11:30 A.M. ON-DEMAND MORNING NAP

- Most infants under 12 months of age need 14 to 15 hours of sleep each day, including naps.
- While your baby naps, use the time to take care of yourself. Take a nap, too! Take a shower, read a book, or do whatever you enjoy. Whatever you choose, remember to stay close to your baby and use other safe-sleep practices like laying her on her back and taking soft toys or pillows out of her sleeping area.

11:30 A.M.–1 P.M. ON-DEMAND FEEDING AND DIAPERING; PLAY AND EXPLORATION

- Use diapering time to talk with your baby or play simple games.
- Work in some tummy/floor time for your baby to stretch and explore simple toys and materials such as rattles, stacking cups, board books, and other items that are safe for your baby to put in his mouth.
- Use words while playing with your baby. Pause and let him respond with coos or other noises, facial expressions, and body movement.

1–1:30 P.M. OUTDOOR OR ACTIVE PLAY TIME

- Holding your baby and walking with him outdoors can be very soothing for both of you. Try to add outside time with him to your schedule every day. You might need to change the time you take him out as the weather changes. For example, on hot summer days you might take him out early in the morning when it's cooler. Just walking outside is a great way to get exercise for you and a great way to see the world for him!
- Take a stroller walk, go to a park, walk to a playground, or just go to your backyard or terrace if you have one and enjoy the sounds, textures, and smells of nature. Put your baby down on the grass or give him a rock, stick or leaf to feel (be careful he doesn't put it in his mouth). Babies love to explore outside, and they learn so much from smelling, seeing, and hearing the outside world.
- Play music and move to the beat with your baby, get on the floor with your baby and stretch – anything active will help your baby practice using large muscles in her arms, legs, back, and belly.

1:30–2 P.M. ON-DEMAND FEEDING, QUIET TRANSITION TO NAP WITH BOOKS, AND MUSIC/SONGS

2–3:30 P.M. ON-DEMAND AFTERNOON NAP

- Infants under 12 months of age need 14 to 15 hours of sleep each day, including naps.
- While your baby naps, use the time to take care of your own needs by napping at the same time, taking a shower, reading a book, or engaging in other self-care routines you enjoy.

3:30–5 P.M. ON-DEMAND FEEDING AND DIAPERING; PLAY AND EXPLORATION

- See if a trusted friend, family member, or your baby’s Early Head Start teacher/home visitor is available and schedule some phone or video call time. This can provide you with some adult conversation, and your baby will enjoy seeing a familiar face, even on screen. You can play peek-a-boo, sing a song, or just talk with the other adult about what you and your baby did during the day. Short video chats can help you and your baby stay connected to important people during a period of physical distancing.

5 P.M. GETTING READY FOR BEDTIME

- It’s important for your baby to have a regular bedtime routine. Show him it’s time to start quieting down by singing soft songs during the evening feeding time. Give him a short bath, read a book, listen to soft music, or tell him a story. If you do something similar each night, he will begin to learn it’s the end of the day and bedtime is coming.

6 P.M. HAVE A GREAT NIGHT!

- Think about all of the important things you do every day for your family. You are exactly the parent your children need you to be right now.

ADDITIONAL TIPS TO CREATE A SCHEDULE AT HOME

A consistent, daily schedule and familiar routine give your baby a predictable day. They can help your baby feel in control of their environment and:

- Feel safe, secure, and comfortable
- Know what is happening now
- Know how to do an activity or task
- Know what comes next
- Engage in learning

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SCHEDULE AND A ROUTINE?

A **schedule** represents the big picture and includes main activities that happen during the day.

Routines are the steps needed to complete each part of schedule.

HOW CAN I HELP MAKE A SCHEDULE OR ROUTINE AT HOME?

- Keep routines and schedules simple and appropriate to the age of your baby.
- Keep the routine as similar as possible day to day.
- Be consistent yet flexible to better meet the needs of your baby on a particular day or given situation (for example, an infant who is ill or overtired may need more frequent naps).
- Teach your baby the schedule and routines:
 - Use words to help your baby know what to expect. For example, “First, we get a clean diaper, then we wash our hands and have breakfast.”
 - Have your baby help with the routine! For example, she can hold her diaper while you get ready to change her. This helps her to learn the routine and enjoy being part of it.
 - Talk with your baby about what you will do together, at the beginning of each day and throughout the day, so she knows what to expect and learn what will happen next.