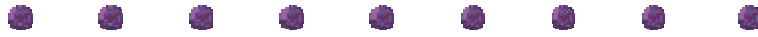


# Meeting the Requirements of Throughout the Day



Creating a schedule that provides children with opportunities for play *throughout the day* requires careful planning. While whole group activities can be meaningful experiences for preschool age children, early childhood research shows us that the most meaningful learning happens during play. \* That is why it is so important that child care providers intentionally set up their daily schedule and environment to offer several opportunities for children to become engaged with materials and peers.

For a schedule to meet the Environment Rating Scales requirement for throughout the day at the good (5) level, the following criteria must be met:

- Children must be able to freely access the materials without any physical or verbal barriers (such as materials on high shelves, containers with lids that cannot be easily removed, or being told some areas are “closed” or “off limits”).
- Play periods must be long enough to be meaningful. In other words, children must have enough time to discover and explore materials before it is time to move on to the next part of the daily schedule. For example, children who are interested in building with blocks need enough time to develop their structures and expand their interests before it is time to clean up. How frustrating would it be to have to clean up your play area just as you were getting an exciting idea?
- The majority of the children should be present during free play opportunities. Offering play opportunities early in the morning and late in the evening when most children are not in attendance does not provide all children with equal opportunities to discover, create, and explore.
- Full day programs (operating 8 hours or more) must offer multiple opportunities for play at different times during the day.
- In after school programs, even though children may have homework, the schedule should reflect at least one meaningful period when the majority of children have access to materials because they have been in large group, structured activities for much of the school day.
- In programs that choose to provide extensive periods of outdoor play, the provider has an additional responsibility to provide access to various materials (for example: building toys, books, and dramatic play) while outdoors so that children may still have significant and varied opportunities to explore and discover.



As you plan your own daily schedule to offer play opportunities throughout the day, consider these sample schedules:

<b>Program 1: A Full Day Program</b>		<b>Program 2: A Short Day Program</b>		<b>Program 3: An After School Program</b>	
7–8	Free Play in Centers	9	All Children Arrive	2–2:30	Arrive, snack
8–8:30	Restroom/Breakfast	9–10:15	Free Play in Centers	2:30–3	Homework /
8:30–9	Circle Time	10:15–10:45	Snack		Quiet Activities
9–10	Outdoor Play/Gym	10:45–11	Circle Time	3–4	Free Play in Centers
10–11	Free Play in Centers	11–12	Outdoor Play	4–5	Outside Play
11–11:30	Restroom/Lunch	12–12:45	Free Play in Centers	5–5:30	Group Activity
11:30–12	Story time/Nap Prep	12:45–1:15	Lunch	5:30–6	Free Play in Centers
12–2	Nap	1:15–2:30	Rest		
2–2:30	Restroom/Snack	2:30–2:45	Story Time		
2:30–3:30	Free Play in Centers	2:45–3	Departure		
3:30–4	Music or Art				
4–5	Free Play in Centers				