



Instruction guide to your Visual Daily Schedule

Why is routine important?

Children thrive on routine. In a time that is so uncertain, being able to predict and know what will consistently happen each day at home, brings a sense of calm and clarity to children. Simple things, like trying to keep children's daily routines consistent, will provide calm for all in the household....and will stop the "curious" questions of "what will we do today?", "what's happening after lunch?" or "I'm bored, I don't know what to do next".

At Interaxcity Children's Museum, we want to help continue to bring smiles to children, fill homes with happiness, and hearts with love. So our educators have been busy designing a very helpful tool, to help bring routine to your home in a fun and engaging way - A Visual Daily Schedule.

Tips before creating your Visual Daily Schedule

Before we begin creating, it's important to start with the key daily requirements such as: getting ready (breakfast, getting dressed, brushing teeth, hair & making bed) morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and bedtime (dinner, bath, story time, bedtime). This is followed by filling the time in between each daily requirement with activities and fun-filled ideas. We have provided Activity Pictures and suggested ideas for you to select from. Everything is adaptable to fit in with what works best with your family.

On the following pages, you will find instructions on how to create a Visual Daily Schedule for your home. We have also provided a "Suggested Daily Schedule" as a reference - this is only a suggestion and we encourage you to discuss what goes into creating your schedule with your children. The goal is to make the daily schedule something that is fun and provides opportunities for learning, play, active time and relaxation.



Steps to create your Visual Daily Schedule

Step One: Discuss, Colour, Create

- Sit down with your children and talk about what the day's schedule might look like.
- Print off our FREE "Create your Visual Daily Schedule" document, which includes:
 - The 'Heading' for your schedule- where children can write their name/s or your family name.
 - The 'Pointer Arrows' - which you will cut out. You can ask your child/ren to select their favourite colour from the options provided. These are used to move around as children progress through their schedule and to show which activity they are up to.
 - The 'Activity Pictures' - which will depict what the children will do throughout the day.
- Talk with your children about each 'Activity Picture' and what they mean. Allowing your child/ren to colour in the 'Activity Picture', will give them a real sense of understanding and ownership over the schedule.
- If you have one, it would be a great idea to laminate your 'Heading', 'Arrows' and 'Activity Pictures' - as you'll be using them every day. If not, you could glue them to some recycled cardboard (eg. recycled cereal or tissue box), or use cardstock, to make them more durable.
- Find a prominent place in your home, where the schedule will be visible- maybe you already have a noticeboard, or whiteboard. Set your schedule up as follows:
 - Using blu-tack, or a magnet, stick the heading at the top of the schedule.
 - Underneath, place the activities, as discussed with your children (details provided step 2 below), vertically, under the heading. Secure these with the blu-tack or magnet.
 - The arrow should point to the first activity of the day (e.g. the "Getting Ready" activity picture) and then subsequently be moved down through the other pictures, as you progress through the day. Allowing children to do this themselves, means they will see where in their day they are, and what's coming next.

Step Two: Plan, Collaborate, Repeat

- Discuss with your children a plan that suits your family at the start of the day. Highlight what times you will or won't be available to them and ask them for input too.
 - For example, if you need to take a work call at 10am, you could schedule an "independent" activity for that time. It's all about making it work for YOU and YOUR family.
 - If you have more than one child, you may want to use an arrow per child (four options are provided in the document) so each child can work at their own pace. Alternatively, you could use different schedules for each child. You can provide an opportunity for older children to create their own schedule, which you can 'approve' at the start of the day.
- Together, you can put the 'Activity Pictures' onto the schedule, in the right order.
- As the children complete the different parts of their day, allow them to move the printable 'arrow' along the schedule, so they can see where they are in their day, and what's coming next.
- Each day, discuss the schedule with your children & rearrange the visual 'activity pictures' to build a new schedule.
- Ensure the new schedule accommodates for your needs too.



Important “Activity Times” to include in your Daily Schedule

Below details important types of activities which we suggest are included each day. We have colour coded the “Activity Pictures” to help you select activities which fall into these themes.

Keep smiling, active and moving

We all need physical activity to help us self-regulate and release lots of happy endorphins. Whether that’s a family walk, doing some yoga, building an obstacle course in your backyard, or even having a family dance party. Try to include some ‘stress-busting’ exercise everyday- if your child (or you!) need extra movement breaks- check out “Go-Noodle”, a free online resource with lots of active breaks, mindfulness activities and dancing!

Ask for a ‘Helping Hand’

Chores are such a great way of letting children know they’re part of the family unit, allows them to have responsibility and helps to get housework done! You could include “helping hand” time, at a time when you’re already cleaning such as after lunch or preparing dinner. This will allow you to get jobs done and the children to join in and learn.

Learning through Play

Creating opportunities for *pretend play and serious fun* is an essential part of every child’s day. Appropriate play with parents/care-givers provides the social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills that are integral to growing children’s brains and enhancing their development.

Quiet time to unwind

Schedule some time to pause and reflect in your day. This looks different for everyone. Perhaps it could be reading a book, doing a puzzle, meditating, or if the children are younger, taking a nap. Allowing ‘quiet time’ will help foster a sense of calm in the home or give you time to make that much needed cup of tea and/or take a conference call!

Looking at ‘Social Time’ in a new way

In a time where social distancing means less interactions with their friends and extended family, socialising is still very important for children. While it may look different, we can still schedule some time to make social connections with the people we can’t physically see. Supervised playdates via Facetime, Zoom, Whatsapp or Skype, can be a great way for your child to show others what they’ve been getting up to, or just have a chat! This is a great option to speak to relatives, grandparents or special friends in home isolation.

A screen-free option is to use the time to create a card, or write a letter together, which can then be sent to the recipient digitally.

Free Time for fun / Rewarding with a ‘Special Activity’

Just like in school and day-care settings, schedule some free time, or longer blocks of time for lunch and snacks. This will give children the opportunity to choose an activity they’d like to do to relax and have some fun.

You could include a “special activity” in your schedule. This might include a reward of an activity your child enjoys doing. If they’ve been doing a good job of sticking to their schedule, there could be a family game (eg. football/basketball, or a board game) later in the day, or you could consider some extra screen time. You know best what your children would enjoy and appreciate!

The end goal of all this crazy, uncertain time is that children & parents/care-givers can smile and remember the special time they spent with their families and that will be something beautiful.



Suggested Activity Schedule

Please note the below is for parent/care-giver reference only. As every family is different and has different needs, we did not want to prescribe times and activities for your schedule. You know your family best - what times work best with your family and which activities will be most suitable.

The Suggested Activity Schedule below provides you guidance on building and creating your Visual Daily Schedule with your child/ren. This example provides details of how you may wish to structure your day and types of activities you can add to your day.

Please note, our Activity Pictures are colour coded to reflect the different types of activities: **Active**, **Learning**, **Quite/Mindful**, **Eating** and **Socialisation**.

By 9:00	Getting Ready	Eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed, make bed, etc.
9:00 – 9:30	Exercise	“Wake and Shake” - get outside if possible, head for a family walk, or do some yoga (check out Cosmic kids on YouTube).
9:30 – 10:30	Growing My Brain	Try to have some ‘screen-free’ learning. You could work on a project, do some maths in the home, or practice writing. Younger children will need shorter, half hour learning blocks
10:30 – 11:00	Snack Time	
11:00 – 12:00	Creative Play Time	Who will you be today? An artist and work on some art and craft? A builder and construct a fort or spaceship? A producer and make your own music or puppet show? Head over to the Interaxcity website or our social media for lots of inspiring ideas!
12:00 – 12:30	Helping Hand	Encourage the children to help with cleaning or preparing food.
12:30 – 13:00	Lunch	
13:00 – 14:00	Quiet Time	Work on a puzzle, read a story, or try a guided meditation from the free ‘Smiling Minds’ app or yoga from Cosmic Kids . Younger children may wish to take a nap.
14:00 – 15:00	‘Online Learning’	Those on digital classroom learning can use this time to complete work. For younger children watch an educational video/TV program.
15:00 – 16:00	Social Time	Make cards, or write letters to friends/family, to send digitally. Have a virtual play date or catch up with a grandparent/special friend by using Facetime, Zoom, Whatsapp, or Skype.
16:00 – 17:00	Exercise	Beat the afternoon slump by getting active with an obstacle course in your back yard, or trying one of “The Body Coach TV’s” free daily PE lessons on YouTube.
17:00 – 18:00	Dinner	
18:00 – 19:00	Free Time	Allow children to relax and unwind and choose an activity. You could reward them if they’ve done a good job by following their schedule.
TBC	Bedtime	