

Establishing Routines

Establishing Routines offers teachers ideas and suggestions for creating and maintaining procedural guidelines in the classroom.

Supporting Kindergarten

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Routines are firm, impersonal standards or guides for behaviour. They may take weeks to establish, but once mastered, they give children a feeling of security and free them to become engaged in the exciting experiences of the Kindergarten day. Routines are efficient, saving both the teacher's and the children's time and energy for more important things.

Before establishing a routine, teachers should consider whether it is necessary. They should check to be sure it is something the children can do and, as much as possible, help them to understand why it is necessary. For example, children should know why it is better to carry a chair with the legs facing down or scissors with the points down.

Once teachers have decided a certain rule or routine is necessary and manageable, they should give an explanation and demonstration. Then they should ask children to practise the routine, giving them support as required. It may sometimes be necessary to reteach the routine. The goal is for the children to assume responsibility for maintaining it.

Consistency is important. Children find it confusing if standards change from day to day. This does not mean, however, that when new situations arise the teacher and the children cannot work out new solutions to management problems. It is sometimes necessary to be flexible and to allow more latitude for one child than others.

Children can accept the fact that an individual is not yet ready to do all that the others do. Such

cases, however, are exceptional, rather than the rule.

Respect for the rights and properties of others, the growth of standards, and acceptance as a member of a group develop through involvement in the social activities of the classroom. Within this setting, children learn to assume responsibility for such things as watering the plants, feeding the guinea pigs, setting the tables for lunch, wiping the tables, cleaning up after painting, and putting equipment and apparatus away on shelves. Thus, the Kindergarten program enables children to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and for the orderly functioning of the group.



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