



2-6 YEAR-OLDS

**SUNNY
IDEAS
FOR A
RAINY
DAY 2**

Contents

● How to Use These Books.....	2
● Rhythm, Routine and Responsibility.....	3
● 2/3 year olds.....	5
● 3/4 year olds.....	7
● 4/5 year olds.....	9
● 5/6 year olds.....	11
● My Bedtime Book Template.....	13
● Additional Resources.....	14
● Acknowledgments.....	15

How To Use These Books

There is a *Sunny Ideas for a Rainy Day* for each of these age groups: 2-6, 6-10, and 10-14. AND, there are multiple installments so that you can add a new age group or new activities to your collection. This is installment 2.

What will you get?

- ♥ A few general developmental attributes of a typically developing child for each age year
- A new activity for each age group
- Instructions for each activity and a list of materials (supplies are easy to find)
- A parent key for:
 - Prep/set up time (1- 4 clocks) 
 - Messy /clean up (1- 4 sponges) 
 - Level of supervision (green, yellow, red)   
 - Why do this activity (besides fun, of course) ?
 - Ideas for extending or adding on +
- Templates for activities when needed
- A list of resources for further reading

Rhythm, Routine and Responsibility

Some mornings are just rough. This is a fact. I know this from my own tough mornings as a child, a single adult, a mom and as a teacher. Sometimes these mornings result from the children, you, or both, going to bed late or not sleeping well the night before. If the morning starts out peaceful, it can get tense over the wrong socks, un-brushed teeth and general “pokeyness.” Gentle reminding blends into nagging which intensifies into insistent urging and then somebody is angry and/or crying.

Sending off your child to school after a rough morning feels terrible.

Wouldn't it be nice if mornings and bedtimes were more peaceful?

Consider Rhythm and Routine.

Routines are a way we structure the rhythms of our day, our week, month, etc. Anything that you do on a regular basis, e.g., Movie Mondays, a bath before bed, Starbucks on your way to work, or date night, is a routine. Sometimes a routine can grow organically out of a natural rhythm. We might structure our morning around what we might do anyway, such as go to the bathroom, drink something, shower, get dressed, etc. Or, we intentionally create routines that help us make a transition – like that coffee on the way to work.

Routines allow us to get into a groove. They ground us. They also help us work within the structure of a family, which is guaranteed to include people at different developmental stages of life and a range of needs (and natural rhythms). When our routines are imbued with meaning, they become ritual, but let's not go into that now.

When you and your family can establish routines that are simple, respectful of rhythm, and adaptable, transitions will be smoother, children will be calmer, *and* there will be more time to do, say, and think about those things that are most important to you.

- ◆ Take the experience of Anne Marie. After setting up a morning routine chart with her 6-year old daughter (see *Mornings At Seven* on pg. 11) Anne Marie was thrilled that, *“We had so much fun! We laughed together and that meant so much to me.”*

She found that she and her daughter, E., now have more time to enjoy each other because they aren't struggling over getting out of the house on time.

“Instead of getting distracted E. waits until she's done and tells me the stories she was making up. And, I'm more relaxed, because E's

awareness of routine has increased with practice. And I don't nag. I just ask her, 'what else is on the chart?' "

You probably already have some routines that you and your children rely on for mealtimes, bathing, or bedtime. They may be working well or may need some tweaking. If you're a person who is thinking, "Oh, I don't do well with structure," or feel that setting up a routine is rigid, I suggest you look at your habits, and you will probably find that you have created some routines that you didn't even realize were there. They are there because they serve a purpose.

Establishing routines with and for your children can be incredibly helpful, but **not** if you or another adult become the "owner" of the routine. You know, the person who has to remind everyone else what to do next, or nag them to do it. No, that isn't how I want it to be for you at all. Let your child take responsibility.

Each activity in this book is designed to have your child take ownership of a routine in her life by involving her in creating it - with your guidance of course. When your child is part of the plan and a star player in it, there's a greater chance that he will stay motivated and cooperative. Mastering the routine gives children pride in their new skills (independence being one of them) and a sense of completion. A structure to follow, encouragement, and acknowledgment from you, are all they need.

A word about rewards:

Though I recognize that reward charts have their place in some families, the activities in this book are designed to help you create routines that bring more harmony to your family life. The sense of taking care of oneself, pride in new independent skills, less stressful transitions, and maybe even more time to do fun things, are already rewards.

Enjoy,

Judy

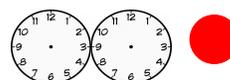
PS: Feel free to adapt any of the activities, after all, *you know your child*. Also, the activities written for the younger ages can be made more sophisticated for older ones. For example, the visual daily chart for 2-3 year-olds, can be easily adapted for a 5 year-old.

Two – Three

- ♥ Can learn 2 new words per day!
- ♥ Mobile now and learning through their senses.
- ♥ Play happens *alongside* other children.
- ♥ Cause and effect is very interesting – filling and dumping.
- ♥ Wants both comfort and independence = frustration
- ♥ Growing sense of self (see above) – “mine,” emotions/feelings.
- ♥ Follows 1 and 2 step directions.
- ♥ Understands “after” but not “before.”



Activity: What’s Happening After?



You’ll need:

1. Large index cards (6x4) or paper (recycled greeting cards are good for this)
2. A camera or phone
3. Glue
4. Markers
5. Optional – laminator

What to do:

1. You are going to make a visual chart of the 6 big daily events in your child’s typical day. Then you’ll add any events that happen on specific days. Six events are the most your child can process.
2. Make a list of the six events. For example, if your child is at home all day the list might include, breakfast, lunch, nap, dinner, bath, bedtime. If (s)he has a regular class, play-group, or the like, write those too.

3. Take a photo your child either doing these things or of the place they happen. You can include the people they always happen with too. You can draw them instead, if you like.
4. Glue the photos/pictures, one on each index card.
5. Show them to your child, and talk about each one. Label each card like, “nap.”
6. Laminate each card if you want – this helps them last.
7. Find a spot for this daily routine that your child can see and reach easily. For this age, I like to keep the chart vertical, starting with morning at the top.
8. You can use a Velcro strip, a magnetic board, bulletin board, or tape on a wall to post your events of the day.
9. Look at the next day’s events in the morning every day. If the day has an addition like Swimming on Monday, make sure you put the picture of swimming in its chronological place.

? This activity builds your child’s understanding of his daily routine. It also helps a child who gets anxious about “when” by showing her the picture and then saying “after this, then ____.” Don’t expect your child to remember, but do take her to the chart when she asks.

? This activity builds vocabulary, as you both will describe and name what you see in the picture. As you do this daily, there will be much conversation around it.

+ If your child is waiting for something like a visit from grandma that isn’t a regular thing, draw a quick picture and put it in the schedule so your child can see that grandma comes after, say, nap.

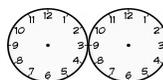
+ With a 3 year old, you can start talking about what you might need to get ready for any of the event on the chart, e.g. “ I see that it’s time for lunch, let’s put these toys away. What else do we need to do?”

Three - Four

- ♥ Can learn 6 new words per day!
- ♥ Exploring with senses and gross motor activities.
- ♥ Curiosity about how things work and why – lots of questions.
- ♥ Cooperative play – sharing materials with others, take turns.
- ♥ Awareness of other people's feelings.
- ♥ Ability to tell a story and interest in telling, "what happened."
- ♥ Follows 2 and 3 step directions.



Activity: My Going To Bed Book



You'll need:

1. Paper or large index cards – 6x4 – or use template on pg. 13
2. Camera
3. Glue
4. Hole Puncher – kid friendly would be great
5. Pipe Cleaners or ribbon (good re-use for gift ribbon)
6. Optional – laminator

What to do:

1. Decide on the four most important steps in your child's getting ready for bed routine. If you don't have a regular routine, use this as an opportunity to brainstorm one. Here's a sample: bath, p.j.s, brush teeth, 2 books, or, p.j.s, teeth brushing, 1 book, backrub.
2. Take pictures of your child doing each one of these steps, including one of him/her all snuggled up in bed.
3. Show the pictures to your child and talk about them while you cut the photos, if necessary, and then glue them onto cards/paper. Remember to leave room for the story you will write together if you're not using the template.

4. Ask your child to tell you what's happening in each photo and take dictation. Use her words as much as possible.
5. Make a cover (hint, a picture of your child happily asleep might be good) and a back page.
6. Laminate each page, if you are doing that.
7. Punch holes in the pages and use either ribbon or pipe cleaner as fasteners. Have your child help punch holes, cut ribbon and/or put fastener into holes. Make sure he is as involved as possible.
8. Use the book as a storybook and as a reference for what needs to happen at bedtime.

? This activity builds vocabulary, as your child will describe and name what she sees in the picture. As you do this daily, there will be much conversation around it.

? Describing and naming also develops other aspects of expressive language, like description, sentence structure, etc.

? Cutting, gluing and twisting pipe cleaners are all wonderful for small motor practice.

? This activity also builds in the concept of sequence, an important cognitive skill. Parts of sequence, like first and last, may come up naturally.

+ Start talking to your child about which parts of the routine(s) he can do by her/himself, e.g., put on p.j.s.

+ When writing the text for the pictures, ask questions about feelings and sensations like, “ How does your body feel when you are all ready for bed?”

Four – Five

- ♥ Active, on the go, busy, collisions common.
- ♥ Pretend play is imaginative and sustained.
- ♥ Interested in how things move & work – transportation, digestion, and elimination.
- ♥ Ideas for problem solving are unusual & creative.
- ♥ Cooperative play – some will collaborate (build off others' ideas).
- ♥ Follows multi-step directions.
- ♥ Rhyming, beginning sounds, alphabet recognition, number recognition 1 - 5.
- ♥ Understands basic sequence of events.
- ♥ Nightmares common.



Activity: Brushing Up



Although it's unlikely that your child will be brushing her/his teeth independently, 4 to 5 years old is a good time to intentionally practice the elements in the sequence of the routine, re-enforce expectations, and encourage independence in keeping track of the routine.

You'll need:

1. Paper or large index cards – 6x4
2. Camera
3. Glue
4. Markers or crayons
5. Optional – laminator

What to do:

1. Before helping your child to brush her teeth, think about the 6 important steps in the sequence (no more than 6, 4 is best).

Say them while your child is brushing his teeth with you. Then ask you child to tell what she remembers.

Or,

if your child already brushes her teeth independently, ask her to help you write down the steps of brushing teeth.

2. Take pictures of your child doing each of the steps. Don't forget to include one of a big clean smile 😊.
3. Have your child do as much cutting and gluing as possible to put the photos on the cards. Label and number them, and then have your child put the steps in order. Laminate if desired (they'll last longer).
4. Find a spot to hang the pictures where your child will see the sequence when brushing.

? This activity builds vocabulary, and expressive language skills as your child will describe and name what she sees in the picture.

? This activity also builds on sequencing skills, an important cognitive skill. Try using ordinals like, "first, second, third" when describing the steps.

? Cutting, gluing and twisting pipe cleaners are all wonderful for small motor practice.

+ Some children like to move a Post-it or clip from one card to the next as each step is completed.

+ You can do this for any sequenced routine like hand washing, clearing the table, cleaning up toys, etc.

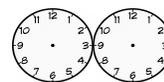
+ When writing the captions for the pictures, ask questions about feelings and sensations like, " How does it feel in your mouth after your teeth are clean?"

Five – Six

- ♥ Can learn 6-9 new words per day!
- ♥ Persists in long term projects and can return to an activity after being interrupted.
- ♥ Plays collaboratively now (builds off of others' ideas).
- ♥ Can tell a story with important events and details using complex sentences.
- ♥ Has the concept of “word” separated from another “word.”
- ♥ Can work with numbers 1-10, e.g. which is less 5 or 6? What number comes before 8? And, addition to make 10.
- ♥ Needs permission from adults, asks “Can I?”
- ♥ Compares objects for similarities and differences (people too).
- ♥ Can recognize the “unit” (e.g. blue, orange) of a repeating pattern.
- ♥ Skips, walks backwards + more complex activities (bike, swim).
- ♥ Clear “handedness.”
- ♥ Pride and self-esteem from learning new skills.
- ♥ Can use clear language to express feelings and causes.
- ♥ Thrives on repetition, consistency and guidelines.



Activity: Mornings at Seven



You'll need:

1. Paper or large index cards – 6x4
2. Camera
3. Glue
4. Clothes line and clothes pins
5. Markers or crayons
6. Optional – laminator

What to do:

1. Sit with your child and brainstorm the things that he must get done on his own in the morning before leaving the house. Decide on the 6 most important ones – or less.
 2. Take a picture of your child doing these things.
 3. Have your child glue the photos on the card/paper. Let him write whatever part of the label he wants, and then decorate as desired. Then laminate if you want.
 4. Discuss which steps need to be done first and which ones are interchangeable, e.g., does it matter if he gets dressed before or after breakfast?
 5. Find an easy to reach spot to hang the clothesline. I recommend against a wall in the room your child sleeps and/or gets ready for her day. Have your child hang up the routine cards with the clothespins in order from left to right.
- See + for other display options.

? Brainstorming, decision-making, sequencing, left to right orientation (for reading) and breaking down a larger whole into parts, are important cognitive and life skills.

? Independence, Independence, Independence!

+ Other ways to display routine steps:

1. Make a flipbook, by punching a hole in each top corner, use binder rings to attach.
2. Make a poster instead of separate cards.
3. Invest in a sequence pocket chart available in teacher catalogues.

My Bedtime Book Template



Additional Resources

(See *Sunny Ideas For A Rainy Day 2-6* for more)

Websites for Child Development

<http://www.healthychildren.org>

Resources and articles for ages 2-5

<http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets>

Developmental assets: what kids need to succeed

Good Books for Parents to Read

[Parenting With Love and Logic: Teaching Children Responsibility](#) by
Foster W. Cline and Jim Fay

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The information in this book is culled from years of experience in the classroom, from readings (see Resources), attending conferences and working in collaboration with inventive, interesting and extraordinary teachers. I cannot name them all, but a few contributed so much to my understanding of children, child development, teaching and creating curriculum that I must name them.

So thank you to:

Karen Biddulph, Director of the Mead School, whose faith in me, friendship, and consistent guidance in the social and emotional development of children, taught me more than I can say.

Joy Lenters, teacher extraordinaire, whose years as my teaching partner (and friend) inspired my quest for depth and meaning in curriculum and is still inspiring me outside of the classroom.

Barbara Allen, who taught me “Make Ten” (See *Sunny Ideas: Chapter 1* for 6-10 year-olds) and so much about mathematics and about the brain.

Marcia Zimmerman, who thought up the original “Block Recipes” (See *Sunny Ideas: Chapter 1* for 2-6 year-olds) and whose compelling and inventive activities supported the learning of so many Pre-K and Kindergarten students over the years.

Chris Mutolo, whose passion for reaching every child and skills at breaking down complicated procedures into small steps helped me do the same.

Unfortunately, I can’t identify where some of the activities in this book come from. I think people have been making visual routine charts for a long time. It was probably Carol Young who showed me how to help my daughter remember things with visual representations.

Thank you.

Judy