

## **Lesson 2.5: Set healthy Routines**

**Background (Read before you teach):** Healthy, daily household routines help ensure family meals, active play time, enough sleep, and limits on time spent watching TV and other screen devices or playing videogames. Healthy routines support children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and reduce risk of obesity (Anderson & Whitaker, 2010). Yet, among US preschool children, only one in seven live in homes with daily healthy routines.

Fewer Latino preschoolers (one in ten) live in homes with daily routines around family meals, sleep, and screen time. Children of immigrant parents are less likely to have bedtime routines, compared to children of US-born parents (Cespedes et al., 2013). Also, these children tend to go to sleep later and wake up later. They spend fewer minutes a day in active play time than children of US-born parents.

**Teaching Tip:** Educators may want to develop a typical school or weekday routine with the entire class and then assign groups to do a weekend or vacation day routine. Share a good example of a routine, developed by another class. If any participants have completed the activity log handed out after Lesson 2.4, use the logs to help develop a healthy daily routine.

**Target Audience:** Mexican-origin families with young children, ages 3 to 8 years

**Key Message:** Healthy routines benefit both children and parents.

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Explain why routines are important to help children feel secure and relax and
- Develop daily schedules that include physical activity, sufficient sleep, regular meals and snacks.

**Materials:**

- Poster boards or paper (1 per every 2-3 participants);
- Markers
- White board and dry erase pens
- Recipes and supplies for the food demonstration (suggested Spinach Berry Salad)

**Handouts:** recipes

**Set-up:** Arrange white board to be visible to all participants

**Opening (Anchor):** (10 min) Welcome! Review what was covered last time and ask if participants have made changes, based on their goals. Congratulate and encourage them to keep on making changes.

Today, we will be talking about the importance of having healthy routines for children.

Ask people to get comfortable and relax. Ask them to notice how they are sitting. Do they naturally cross their arms or legs in a certain way? Now ask them to repeat the exercise but do it just the opposite. (Alternatively, ask them to get up and move to another chair in the room).

**Ask:** How does it feel??

Explain that we form routines and habits to help us be more comfortable and to relax.

**Lesson (Add):** (15 min) Discuss the following points:

- **Say:** Routines also help children to relax, feel secure and comfortable. **Ask:** What are other ways that you think routines help families? (Routines can help children behave better and learn more; make the day less hectic; get children to help with family chores; help parents relax and find time for themselves)
- **Ask:** What is a typical daily routine like in this community (or for your family)? (Write on whiteboard) Do you think this is a healthy routine? Why or why not? What is missing from this day? What could be shortened or eliminated?
- **Say:** A healthy daily routine for children includes times for meals and snacks, active play time, naps or quiet time, and getting ready for bed. **Ask:** Which activities are most difficult to fit into a day's time? What makes it so difficult? Who has a solution to offer? Some possible answers may include:
  - Move television from bedroom to living room to help set bedtimes
  - Add daily household chores to the routine and get children to help
  - Make plans with friends or family to take walks or go to the park with children

**Activity (Apply):** (25 min) While the assistant starts the food demonstration, the educator leads the activity.

- **Make a healthy routine:** Handout poster paper and pens. Ask parents to work in groups of 2-3 to set up a daily routine for one of their young children. Divide the work so that at least one weekend and weekday routine is planned. Ask parents to think about things that should be done in a day's time first. Then, they will put those things in sequential order – minimize transitions (i.e. all bathroom things together, all bedroom things together, etc). Ask parents about what they can do the night before (i.e. make lunch, set out clothing). Then, assign times to the ordered events – make sure parents understand that children only go at one speed, so they need to assign enough time for the *children* to complete the tasks. Remind parents to plan a schedule that allows for enough sleep (9-11 hours for school children).

- Invite at least two groups (one weekend and one weekday) to share. **Ask:** Does the routine include planned meals and snacks, quiet time, and active play? How do your routine and your child's fit each other? How do both parents and children get what they need?
- **Say:** Let's see how physical activity fits into your child's day. **Ask:** Was anyone able to find out how much physical activity their children get on most days from the log summary handed out last time? Which activities does your child do? Alternatively, **ask:** Looking at your routine, when can your child be active? How?
- Food demonstration, tasting and sharing. Pass around the containers, showing the participants any foods that might be new or unfamiliar (for example, low-fat products, whole grain alternatives). Explain step-by-step how the food is prepared. Serve samples for tasting. **Ask:** What are some ways that your children can help prepare this recipe? How can you use it at home? What do you like about the recipe? What would you change?

**Closing (Away):** (10 min) Scheduling yourself and your child is the first step you take to help your family get more things done during the day and lead a healthier life. Pair-up and set specific goals.

What did you learn? Why is this information important to you? Choose a goal to work on this month (week). Try to choose a simple goal that is doable within a week. For example, "I will set a bedtime with lights out for my child". Write your goal on the recipe handout. Ask a friend or family member to help support you in reaching your goal. Invite families to share their goals.

### References and Resources:

- Anderson, S. E., & Whitaker, R. C. (2010). Household Routines and Obesity in US Preschool-Aged Children. *Pediatrics*, 125(3), 420-428. doi:10.1542/peds.2009-0417
- Cespedes, E. M., McDonald, J., Haines, J., Bottino, C. J., Schmidt, M. E., & Taveras, E. M. (2013). Obesity-Related Behaviors of US and Non-US Born Parents and Children in Low-income Households. *Journal of developmental and behavioral pediatrics : JDBP*, 34(8), 541-548. doi:10.1097/DBP.0b013e3182a509fb

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