

# NYCEEC Sample Schedule for In-Person Learning: Infants and Toddlers

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## Considerations

- Young children learn best in the context of relationships, through play and engaging hands-on activities. In early childhood classrooms, the relationships children develop with their teaching teams and caregivers are crucial to their development and learning. The younger the child, the more in-person experiences are recommended. This is because young children learn through play and in the context of relationships with caring adults, and are not yet independent users of technology. Therefore, EarlyLearn programs are encouraged to provide full time in-person slots for infants and toddlers. See the [Blended Learning Implementation Guidance](#) for strategies and suggestions for in-person learning with young children.
- As children and families return to your program, they may have gone through individual or collective traumatic experiences. Traumatic experiences can range from witnessing or experiencing violence to natural disasters, sudden changes, loss or illness. Children react to traumatic experiences in different ways. Safe nurturing and predictable relationships can help mitigate the adverse impact of trauma. Please be sensitive to the needs of children and families and make adjustments to this suggested schedule based on their social and emotional needs.
- At the beginning of the school year, the initial transition for infants and toddlers can include families accompanying children to the classroom, following health checks. Consider staggering the time for families to drop-off in the classroom in order to ensure social distancing. This can be extended as needed based on the comfort level of the children, staff, and families. Once families are comfortable, children should be dropped off (and picked up) outside their classrooms (or designated entrance), taking care to follow the program's safety and health procedures. When possible, limit the number of adults accessing the building to prevent the spread of illness. Consider that families may experience a range of stress and anxiety during this time, and take this into consideration when planning transitions (such as drop-off, pick-up).
- Transition strategies such as singing songs, chants, rhymes, playing word or guessing games, and fingerplays can limit "wait time" and make transitions fun and productive. It is important to consider each child's transition needs by setting routines and schedules that are responsive to those needs, so children will experience a safe, nurturing, and predictable learning environment.
- Physical distancing looks different for young children than for adults. Children can play together in smaller groups, with a focus on washing hands and washing toys, instead of keeping children apart.
- Outdoor space allows social distancing to happen more naturally while providing fresh air and ventilation. Consider ways to use the outdoors for additional activities throughout the day, such as, morning meeting, snack, read alouds and more. This can provide children with opportunities to explore and learn together while maximizing safety considerations.
- In addition to using outdoor space more often, please consider any and all safety measures that must be implemented to ensure the safety of the children in the program.
- Developing a schedule and building routines:
  - Young children benefit from consistent routines. Predictability builds a sense of security and trust in those who care for them. Partnering with families to better understand caregiving practices, expectations and routines can help build a sense of continuity between the home and child care setting.
  - Timing may vary depending on children's individual needs and staggered schedules (e.g. infant's individual eating and sleeping schedules) . Maintaining a flexible but

predictable sequence of events helps children to feel safe and secure.

- Note: infants and toddlers require a more individualized care routine as their sleeping and eating schedules will likely vary from those of the older children.
- Posting a simple picture schedule at children’s eye level allows children to keep track of how the day unfolds and to anticipate what comes next.
- Advance planning and coordination among all members of the teaching team allows for smoother transitions throughout the day.
- Transition strategies such as singing songs, chants, rhymes, playing word or guessing games, and fingerplays can limit “wait time” and make transitions fun and productive. It is important to consider each child’s transition needs by setting routines and schedules that are responsive to those needs, so children will experience a safe, nurturing, and predictable learning environment.

Please also reference the following guidance documents when developing your schedule:

- [Early Childhood Framework for Quality \(EFO\)](#)
- [DECE Policy Handbook](#)
- [Connections: Infant & Toddler Curriculum for Responsive Care](#)
- [DOHMH Checklist for Child Care Programs](#)

## Sample Schedule at a Glance for Infants

Time Allotted	Activity/Routine
Timing should be flexible and based on each child's individualized needs and established routines.	Greeting and Arrival
	Feeding
	Diapering Changing
	Sleeping
	Playing

## Sample Schedule at a Glance for Toddlers

Minutes Allotted	Activity/Routine
30 minutes	Greeting Routine/Arrival/Handwashing/ Breakfast
10 minutes	Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing
90 minutes	Free Choice Time
10 minutes	Clean-up/Handwashing/Toileting
10 minutes (5 minutes for transition)	Music and movement
20 minutes	Clean-up/Handwashing/Snack
50 minutes	Gross Motor Time
20 minutes	Handwashing/Lunch
10 minutes	Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing
120 minutes	Rest/Nap Time
20 minutes	Toileting/Diapering/Handwashing
105 minutes	Free Choice
10 minutes	Clean-up/Handwashing

Minutes Allotted	Activity/Routine
50 minutes	Gross Motor
10 minutes	Clean-up/Toileting/Handwashing
20 minutes	Snack
10 minutes	Clean-up
10 minutes	Closing Meeting/Dismissal

## Detailed Considerations for Routines and Activities

Routine/ Activity	Health & Safety Considerations	General Considerations
Greeting Routine/Arrival /Handwashing/ Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clean and sanitize the sink before handwashing.</li> <li>- Staff and children must wash hands upon entry to the classroom.</li> <li>- Personal belongings should be completely contained within an individual location (i.e. cubby).</li> <li>- Please ensure children's belongings do not touch each other and personal items, such as sheets, are washed weekly.</li> <li>- Staff personal belongings must be out of children's reach.</li> <li>- Please maintain sign-in / sign-out records and consider incorporating a sign-in procedure into your health check process at the building entrance.</li> <li>- Consider staggering arrival times to prevent overcrowding and long wait times.</li> </ul> <p><u>Handwashing Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Handwashing or hand sanitizing must take place for all children and program staff:</li> <li>- Upon arrival to the building and classroom</li> <li>- Upon arrival to the first program activity</li> <li>- Between all program activities</li> <li>- After using the restroom and supporting children with toileting</li> <li>- Before and after eating</li> <li>- Before departing the last program activity</li> <li>- Any time after touching the eyes, nose, or mouth, or any time a bodily fluid may be on the hands</li> <li>- Any time after touching a frequently touched/shared surface.</li> <li>- There should be a visual sequence of handwashing posted at children's eye</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expect longer timeframes at the beginning of the school year as children become familiar with routines.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should greet children and families/caregivers by their preferred names as they arrive.</li> <li>- Teaching teams check-in with families/caregivers about how the child is doing and gather the information they need for the child's day.</li> <li>- Consider providing opportunities for families to come into the building during orientation or staggered schedule in order to build trust at the beginning of the school year.</li> <li>- Teaching teams complete the child's daily health check.</li> <li>- Teaching teams assist children in washing their hands, and if desired, prepare for breakfast.</li> <li>- Teaching teams sit at the table and enjoy breakfast with children who eat, as well as engage with children who are ready to play.</li> <li>- See <a href="#">Connections 24-36 Months Section VII: Daily Communication Form</a> (page 58) to communicate with families about their child's eating and toileting procedures.</li> </ul>

Routine/ Activity	Health & Safety Considerations	General Considerations
	<p>level by the sink for children to reference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refer to <a href="#">Environment Rating Scale Institute</a> for handwashing procedures</li> </ul>	
Mealtimes (Breakfast, Lunch, Snack)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infants' eating schedules should be individualized and based on their natural eating cycle.</li> <li>- Mothers who are breastfeeding should be given privacy in a clean and quiet room.</li> <li>- Families should provide the number of bottles needed in one day for feeding. Information from the Centers for Disease Control and prevention can be shared with families on <a href="#">how to clean, sanitize, and store infant feeding items</a>.</li> <li>- Caregivers must wear gloves while preparing bottles and during feeding.</li> <li>- Clean and sanitize the tables and other eating surfaces before and after meals.</li> <li>- Children and staff should wash their hands before and after meals.</li> <li>- As children finish washing their hands with adults' assistance, they should go directly to the sanitized tables or eating surfaces so that their hands are not recontaminated before eating.</li> <li>- Programs should arrange the seating arrangements during meals to provide as much space between individuals as possible to the extent that staff can also still engage in conversations with the children and provide adequate supervision.</li> <li>- Spread out children and teachers among the tables as much as possible to reduce the number of children/teachers at each table.</li> <li>- Children and staff should not share food during.</li> <li>- As children finish lunch at their own pace, they begin to toilet (if necessary) and clean their hands in preparation for rest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meal time is an opportunity to build a family-like atmosphere through conversation and relationship building. Even though <b>family-style meals are not possible at this time</b>, you can still use meal time to foster conversation and connection between children, adults, and peers. Programs are required to provide all meals in the classroom and temporarily the meals cannot be served family style.</li> <li>- Meal times are a great time to engage children in conversation. For example, "I noticed you built something in the block area with Sam. Tell me about what you made."</li> <li>- Meal times are a great opportunity for young children to develop fine motor skills. Provide support, but encourage their efforts as they open containers and try using utensils as they eat.</li> <li>- Consider making additional activities available (table top toys and/or books, see guidance below) as children finish eating, so staff can individually assist with health and safety practices and children are not waiting around for an activity.</li> <li>- For meals, please refer to the <a href="#">Revised USDA Meal Guidelines</a></li> <li>- Time lapse between meals should be no more than 3 hours unless children are sleeping.</li> <li>- Children who are in programs for 8 hours or more will need multiple opportunities to eat. These should be incorporated into the schedule and met on an individual basis.</li> <li>- Children may need their diapers changed or to use the toilet during</li> </ul>

Routine/ Activity	Health & Safety Considerations	General Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching teams should plan for staggered lunches based on children’s natural eating and sleeping patterns .</li> <li>- If necessary, teaching teams can read to children who are finished with lunch and waiting for nap or children can use this time to look at books, sit with a puzzle, shape sorter, doll, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Handwashing/Snack and should be supported as needed.</p>
Diapering/ Toileting/ Handwashing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When supporting diapering/toileting, staff members should wash their hands and the child’s hands beforehand, and staff should wash their hands again afterwards once they have finished disinfecting the diapering area.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should wear disposable gloves and aprons when supporting diapering/toileting. When used, gloves should be changed.</li> <li>- If coming into contact with another person (e.g. when supporting a child during toileting), change gloves in between contacts with another child</li> <li>- Before transitioning to the next activity (e.g. after wiping down changing tables).</li> <li>- Whenever a child’s clothing becomes dirty with bodily fluids (including drool), change the child’s clothing, and as necessary, clean the child (e.g. wash hands or arms).</li> <li>- Children should have multiple changes of clothes on hand at the program. Schools should make efforts to have spare changes of clothes for children who either do not have extra clothes or have used their extra clothes, as practicable.</li> <li>- Schools should properly store any child’s soiled clothing for family or guardian retrieval at the end of the day.</li> <li>- For more detailed diapering and handwashing procedures, please see <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refer to the <a href="#">Environment Rating Scale Institute</a> and <a href="#">here</a> for diapering and handwashing procedures.</li> <li>- If children are engaged in play, teaching teams should prepare individual children for diaper changing or toileting. All children should be given notice of this transition in advance. Remind children they can return to their play when they are finished diapering/toileting.</li> <li>- Toilet learning should only be done if the child demonstrates ability and readiness. All toilet learning must be done in coordination with the child’s family.</li> <li>- In addition to a scheduled time for diapering/toileting, diapering/toileting should be done throughout the day and on an individualized basis, as needed.</li> <li>- There should be a visual sequence of handwashing posted at children’s eye level by the sink for children to reference.</li> <li>- See <a href="#">Connections: A Responsive Caregiving Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers 12-24 Months: Appendix C: Toilet Learning</a> for more training tips and strategies.</li> </ul>
Table Toys and		



Routine/ Activity	Health & Safety Considerations	General Considerations
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please refer to the <a href="#">Guidance for Cleaning and Sanitizing Toys</a>.</li> <li>- Children should wash their hands if they touch their mouth or cough and sneeze on them.</li> <li>- Materials should be set aside immediately to be disinfected and sanitized later if children cough or sneeze on them, or put them in their mouths.</li> <li>- DOHMH strongly encourages children to not bring toys from home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Table toys may include smaller materials like puzzles, magna-tiles, and interlocking blocks, and can easily be used at tables or on the rug.</li> <li>- Please ensure all items are appropriate for the age group. Small manipulatives can be a choking hazard for children under 3-years-old.</li> <li>- Encourage children to spread out as much as possible while playing (i.e. 1-2 children per table/area)</li> <li>- Individual sets of toys and materials may be made available for each child in individual bins labeled with the child's name and stored separately.</li> </ul>
Free Choice Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hands should be washed when visibly soiled (paint, glue, sand etc.) and after children sneeze, cough, and secrete other bodily fluids.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should assist children who need help with handwashing. There should be a visual sequence of handwashing posted at children's eye level by the sink for children's reference.</li> <li>- Handwashing before/after messy play (play dough, water, sand, paint, glue, etc.) is needed during Free Choice Time before moving to a different activity.</li> <li>- Refer to <a href="#">this guidance</a> when cleaning and disinfecting toys.</li> <li>- Children should clean hands if they put them in their mouth or cough and sneeze on them.</li> <li>- Materials should be set aside to clean later if children cough or sneeze on them, or put them in their mouths.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should position themselves intentionally so all children are visible to an adult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching teams should support children in exploring materials in the manner each child chooses.</li> <li>- Activities/materials should be age appropriate, based on children's interests and accessible to all children in all interest areas throughout the day.</li> <li>- Enough materials should be available so children are not expected to share.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should sit on the floor or at eye-level with children and engage in play.</li> <li>- Children should have the ability to move in and out of interest areas, as desired.</li> <li>- Children need to wash hands before and after water play. They need to wash their hands after all other messy play, such as paint, sand, glue, etc.</li> <li>- Children should wash their hands as appropriate during play.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should narrate what children are doing during their play and engage in conversation as is appropriate. Teaching teams should consider using reflections and open-ended questions while children are engaged in play, without expectation that the children will respond.</li> </ul>

Routine/ Activity	Health & Safety Considerations	General Considerations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children may need their diapers changed or to use the toilet during Free Choice Time and should be supported as needed.</li> </ul>
Music and Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children should be in a large group for no longer than 5 minutes with 5 minutes to transition in and out of the activity.</li> <li>- Movement areas must be large enough to allow freedom of movement without collisions between children, materials, and/or furniture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Music and movement activities involve songs, music, fingerplays, musical instruments, other movement activities.</li> <li>- Children who do not show interest may be offered alternative activities.</li> <li>- Children should have the ability to move around freely.</li> <li>- Children may need their diapers changed or to use the toilet during Music and Movement and should be supported as needed.</li> </ul>
Gross Motor Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rotate classes in this space to reduce the number of children and teachers as much as possible.</li> <li>- Ensure that gross motor areas are safe and appropriate for infants (e.g., play areas, baby gyms, etc.).</li> <li>- Hand sanitizer, hand napkins/tissue, and a first aid kit should be available at all times when outdoors.</li> <li>- Hand sanitizer should not be used with children under 1.</li> <li>- Programs that do not have onsite outdoor play space can consider utilizing open spaces, such as nearby green spaces, not being used by other groups (adults or children).</li> <li>- If children are taken off-site, you must have the appropriate written permission from families and all children over the age of 2 must wear a face covering.</li> <li>- As children and teaching teams return from gross motor play, hands should be washed upon reentry to the classroom.</li> <li>- Hands should be cleaned when visibly soiled (dirt/dust particles from outdoor elements) and after children sneeze, cough, and secrete other bodily fluids.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children should have the opportunity to explore large muscle movements, such as crawling, climbing, walking, and running.</li> <li>- Teaching teams should plan for this time based on children's interests and needs.</li> <li>- Teaching teams observe and interact with children as they use gross motor toys and equipment.</li> <li>- Ten minutes are built into this sample schedule to allow for transition to and from the playground/gross motor area.</li> <li>- The outdoor/gross motor play area should be arranged so all areas are visible to the staff and easily supervised at all times.</li> <li>- Children may need their diapers changed or to use the toilet during Gross Motor Time and should be supported as needed.</li> </ul>

Routine/ Activity	Health & Safety Considerations	General Considerations
Nap/Rest Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To avoid the spreading of germs, children should not lie in the same direction. (head-to-toe pattern)</li> <li>- Each mat/cot must be labeled with the child's name.</li> <li>- DOHMH guidance states that during nap/rest time children should rest at least 6 ft. apart and head-to-toe.</li> <li>- Children should have a cot cover and blanket.</li> <li>- If children must rest directly on the cot/mat surface, disinfect before and after use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children should have designated sleeping areas that are consistent each day.</li> <li>- Teaching teams may sit with children, rub their backs, read books or support each individual child in falling asleep.</li> <li>- Children who are not napping should have support from a teacher and be provided with quiet activities to explore during nap.</li> <li>- Children should always be able to sleep on their natural schedules. Teaching teams should monitor children's cues around sleep and should always adjust their classroom schedules to accommodate children's individual needs. Additionally, some children in this age range may also need a morning nap.</li> <li>- Dimmed lights and quiet music will help transition to nap.</li> <li>- See <a href="#">Connections: A Responsive Caregiving Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers 12-24 Months: Section II</a> for ideas about supporting children's sleep.</li> </ul>
Closing Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and teaching teams gather to end the day with a closing ritual or song.</li> <li>- Children and teaching teams begin to prepare for dismissal.</li> <li>- Teaching teams assist children in packing their belongings and preparing to leave.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Closing meetings must not exceed 10 minutes (including transitions in and out of the group).</li> <li>- Consider staggering dismissal times to prevent overcrowding and long wait times.</li> </ul>