



**Indicator:** The school promotes social/emotional competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions. (5122)

**Explanation:** Social-emotional health and well-being is important for student development and success in school (Raver, 2002). Schedules and routines are important to promoting social emotional competencies in children because the structure of schedules, routines and rituals helps them understand the expectations of the learning environment and predict what will happen in that environment.

**Questions:** How do school routines and rituals impact students' social-emotional competencies? What should teachers consider when building school routines?

*How do school routines and rituals impact students' social-emotional competencies?*

There is growing evidence that a significant percentage of young children experience poor social-emotional health, often resulting in challenging behaviors. These challenging behaviors are more likely to lead to early and persistent peer rejection, frequently punitive contacts with teachers, unpleasant family interactions and failure in school (Smith, 2006). Children lacking in social, emotional and behavioral health are at high risk for experiencing a number of short- and long-term problems (Cimino et al., 2007).

Research has established a compelling link between social emotional development and school success (Raver, 2002; Smith, 2006). Social, emotional, and behavioral competence in young children predicts their academic performance in the first grade (Raver & Knitzer, 2002).

Schedules and routines are important to promoting social emotional competencies in children. The terms routines and schedules are often used interchangeably. Schedules represent the big picture and include the main activities to be completed daily. Routines are the steps done to complete each item on the schedule.

Schedules and routines promote social emotional competencies because they are repetitive, helping children learn classroom activities and allowing children to predict what will happen next. This helps children feel secure and prepared. Classrooms with consistent schedules and routines facilitate children's understanding of the learning environment expectations. Children who are familiar with classroom schedules and routines are more likely to be engaged and attentive (Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2007). Schools can support social/emotional competency by providing a school culture, or the "collective values, beliefs, and norms" (Redding, 2014a, p. 13) that are made apparent by the school's "mission statement, rituals, routines, and relationships among its personnel and students" (Redding, 2014a, p. 13).

*What should teachers consider when building school routines?*

Teachers should provide explicit instruction to students, teaching them each activity in the schedule, along with all of the smaller steps needed to complete the routines. Teachers should not assume that all children will learn routines and schedules automatically or by observing their peers.

Routines occur at school and home. The following steps are an example of a routine associated with a story time. (Note that there could be several sub-routines within one larger routine.)

1. Gathering in a circle on a floor mat;
2. Sitting on the floor cross-legged;
3. Listening to the teacher read;
4. Looking at pictures in a storybook;
5. Answering questions.

When teachers are planning the daily schedule they should consider the following: (*Adapted from Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, 2007.*)

- Balance of activities – Include a mix of activities that differ in noise level, pace, or location.
- Number of activities available – Have enough variety in available activities so that all children find something that piques their interest.
- Number of adults available – Have enough adults present to provide adequate supervision and facilitation of skill development; remember that students will need to be explicitly taught the steps of routines, initially.
- Children’s attention span – With younger children, it’s important to include high-interest materials and activities
- Children’s cultural and linguistic background – Be sure to include activities and materials that are relevant to students’ family backgrounds
- Longer play periods result in increased play behaviors – Make sure children have enough time during play periods to truly become engaged in an activity

Schools can intentionally infuse social and emotional competency building skills by enhancing its culture with an intentional focus on attitudes and behaviors that build and reflect self-worth, respect, and responsibility. Specific social skills can be taught and reinforced, including such basic but essential skills such as making

introductions, paying and receiving compliments, and not forgetting the magic words—please and thank you. Cooperative learning methods build social skills, and service learning provides opportunities to practice pro-social behaviors. (Redding, 2014b, p. 22)

### References and resources

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