

# We Skoolhouse

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## **PRESCHOOLER SCHEDULE GUIDE: CLASSROOM**



# ESTABLISHING YOUR SCHEDULE



Cultivating a structured schedule provides children with a feeling of predictability, reliability, and safety in their day-to-day experiences. While the overall skeleton of the week is structured and predictable (meal time, outdoor times, rest time, etc.) the time within each event provides far greater flexibility and child-centered experiences. **Some tips to keep in mind:**

- **Establish Consistent Routines:** Consistency is key in establishing predictable routines for activities and events, as it provides a sense of security and structure for young children, helping them feel safe and confident in their environment.
- **Reduce Transitions:** Minimizing the number of transitions throughout the day allows children to have longer, uninterrupted periods of engagement in activities. By reducing the need to "shift gears" frequently, children can better focus their attention and fully immerse themselves in their experiences.
- **Prioritize Outdoor Time:** Outdoor play is essential for children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development. Incorporating ample outdoor time into the daily schedule provides children with opportunities to explore nature, engage in active play, and experience sensory-rich stimuli, fostering holistic development and a love for the outdoors.
- **Promote Autonomy in Exploration:** Encouraging autonomy in children's exploration of classroom centers and materials empowers them to follow their interests, make choices, and take ownership of their learning. Providing open-ended materials and allowing children to freely explore different areas of the classroom promotes creativity, problem-solving skills, focus, and independence.
- **Offer Flexibility and Adaptability:** While consistency is important, it's also essential to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of individual children and the group as a whole. Being attuned to children's cues and adjusting the schedule accordingly ensures that their developmental needs are met and fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment.



# **PRESCHOOLER SCHEDULE**

# SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE - PRESCHOOLERS



Arrival & Morning Free Play

Handwashing & Morning Snack

Morning Gathering & Investigations

Outdoor Play

Handwashing & Lunch

Rest Time

Story Time & Afternoon Activity

Handwashing & Afternoon Snack

Outdoor Play

Dismissal & Free Play

# SAMPLE WEEKLY SCHEDULE - PRESCHOOLERS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Arrival &amp; Morning Free Play</b>				
<b>Hand-washing &amp; Morning Snack</b> (Approximately 30 minutes depending on age & group size)				
<b>Morning Gathering &amp; Investigations</b> (About 15-20 minutes depending on age & stage of development)				
<b>Outdoor Play</b> (At least 1 hour at minimum recommended)				
<b>Hand-washing &amp; Lunch</b> (Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on age and group size)				
<b>Rest Time</b> (Approximately 45 minute to 1 hour depending on age & stage of development)				
<b>Story Time &amp; Afternoon Activity; Provocations, Music &amp; Movement, etc.</b> (About 15-20 minutes)				
<b>Hand-washing &amp; Afternoon Snack</b> (Approximately 30 minutes depending on age & group size)				
<b>Outdoor Play</b> (At least 1 hour at minimum recommended)				
<b>Free Play &amp; Dismissal</b>				





# **DAILY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**



**Morning Free Play** in a classroom setting serves as a gentle transition for children as they move from home to school. During this time, children are provided with the opportunity and space to follow their interests, explore materials, and engage in self-directed play. It acts as a warm-up for the day, allowing children to ease into the learning environment at their own pace, fostering a sense of comfort, autonomy, and readiness for the day ahead.



## **Hand-washing and Snack Time**

present valuable opportunities for children to engage in meaningful activities that promote hygiene, independence, and social skills. As children gather for hand-washing, they participate in a communal routine that reinforces the importance of cleanliness and prepares them for their food handling ahead.

For snack time, try to encourage ways to actively involve children in the process, whether it be gathering, preparing, and/or serving snacks or beverages to their peers. By involving children in these tasks, we empower them to take ownership of their environment, develop self-help skills, and foster a sense of responsibility and cooperation within the classroom community.



**Morning Gathering** is a special time when children come together on the carpet as a group to sing songs, share stories, and connect with one another. At We Skoolhouse, we prioritize developmentally appropriate practice, recognizing the importance of offering children autonomy and choice in their daily routines. Therefore, gathering on the carpet is presented as an optional event that children are invited to partake in but not forced to attend, especially our youngest learners.

Be attentive to the cues and needs of the children, taking into consideration their varying attention spans and developmental stages. Infants typically have short attention spans, ranging from a few seconds to a few minutes, while toddlers may be able to focus for slightly longer periods, up to 2-3 minutes. Preschoolers, on the other hand, can typically sustain attention for 5-10 minutes, depending on the level of engagement.

Young children naturally have shorter attention spans and may struggle to sit still for extended periods. Therefore, teachers should ensure that gathering activities are developmentally appropriate and engaging, respecting children's need for movement and exploration. If children show signs of restlessness or disengagement, teachers should feel comfortable cutting the meeting short or shifting towards more movement-based activities to maintain participation.



**Investigations** in the classroom are a dynamic and enriching time for children to delve deeper into their current areas of interest to foster a culture of inquiry and exploration, where children are encouraged to ask questions, exchange ideas, and pursue group projects related to the ongoing investigation. This dedicated time allows children to engage in meaningful discussions, collaborate with their peers, and develop critical thinking skills as they explore topics of interest in more depth.

Beyond the discussion, there may be a corresponding yet intentional provocations or collaborative activities relative to the current investigation. While children have the optionality to engage in collaborative project work, they should also have the flexibility and autonomy to explore the other centers and materials around the room.

Remember, less is more and repetition is key when it comes to the provocations and activities relative to the current investigation. Meaning, instead of offering the children something new every day, slow down and revisit activities, conversations, and experiences several times over. This promotes deep and meaningful learning, while emphasizing quality over quantity driven experiences.





**Outdoor Play** is vital for children's holistic development, encompassing physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional aspects. Nature serves as a dynamic classroom, offering diverse opportunities for learning and growth. Engaging with natural elements, such as trees, rocks, and water, allows children to develop a sense of wonder, curiosity, and connection to their environment.

Outdoor play stimulates children's creativity, problem-solving skills, and physical development. Exploring natural elements encourages sensory exploration and fosters a deeper understanding of the world around them. Additionally, playground equipment and open spaces provide opportunities for active play and movement, aiding in the development of gross motor skills, coordination, and spatial awareness.



Outdoor play allows children to benefit from fresh air and sunshine, contributing to their overall health and well-being. Ideally, children should spend at least 2 hours outside daily within the school day, as research suggests that more time spent outdoors correlates with improved physical and mental well-being. Exposure to natural light and vitamin D from the sun supports physical growth, strengthens the immune system, and enhances mood and energy levels.

**Hand-washing and Lunchtime** are pivotal moments in a child's day, not only for nourishment but also for social interaction and bonding. Teachers can enhance these experiences by joining the children during mealtime, creating a supportive and engaging environment.

Hand-washing before lunch serves as a hygienic ritual, but it's also a chance for teachers to interact with the children on a personal level. By joining the children at the sink, teachers can model proper hand-washing techniques and engage in casual conversation, fostering a sense of connection.

During lunchtime, teachers have the opportunity to sit with the children, sharing a meal and engaging in meaningful conversation. This simple act of sitting together promotes a sense of community and belonging, allowing teachers to build rapport with the children and strengthen relationships.



**Rest Time** is a crucial part of a child's daily routine, providing them with the opportunity to recharge and relax. During this period, children have the chance to rest their bodies and minds after a busy day of events and activities.

Creating a calm and comfortable environment is key to ensuring that children can fully benefit from nap or rest time. Soft mats or cots are provided, and the lights are dimmed to create a soothing atmosphere. Soft, soothing music may also be played to help children relax.



While some children may nap during this time, others may simply need quiet relaxation. Teachers respect the individual needs of each child, allowing them to rest or engage in quiet activities such as reading books or listening to calming music.



## Story Time

Carving out dedicated time every day for story time is not just a pleasant pastime; it's a powerful educational tool with far-reaching benefits. Integrating story time as a segue before or after a rest time can be particularly effective, providing children with a calming transition and an opportunity to unwind or re-energize. The cozy, intimate atmosphere created during story time fosters positive associations with books and reading. By incorporating story time into the daily routine in this manner, teachers can maximize its potential as both an educational and emotional experience for children, promoting comfort, joy, and a life-long love for reading.

For children who struggle with sitting for extended periods of time, providing opportunities for movement and exploration during story time can be beneficial. Allowing them to move around the classroom and pursue their approach to learning ensures that they remain engaged and active participants in the read-aloud experience. While they may not be seated in one place, they are still able to listen to the story and absorb its content. By creating a flexible environment where children have the freedom to move and choose how they engage with story time, teachers empower them to take ownership of their learning journey. As children feel ready to join in, they can approach the story and participate in discussions or activities at their own pace, fostering a sense of autonomy and confidence in their abilities. This inclusive approach not only accommodates different learning styles and preferences but also ensures that all children have the opportunity to benefit from the enriching experience of story time.

## Afternoon Activities

Based upon your program or school, you may offer special activities or classes (e.g. music, yoga, etc.) that may occur in the morning or in the afternoon.

Special classes, such as music or yoga, offer valuable opportunities for children to explore new activities and develop new skills. However, it's crucial for instructors to be mindful of children's attention spans and their intrinsic need to move and touch. Understanding these aspects of child development can enhance the effectiveness and enjoyment of the class for everyone involved.

Children have naturally shorter attention spans compared to adults, especially in structured settings. Therefore, instructors should keep activities engaging, interactive, and age-appropriate to maintain children's interest and participation. Incorporating a variety of sensory experiences, such as music, movement, and hands-on exploration, can help captivate children's attention and make the class more enjoyable and effective.

Alternatively, extra time in the school day may be designated for different activities such as STEAM or literacy. Consider how STEAM and literacy concepts can be adopted and explored in open-ended and sensory-rich ways, as children learn best through their senses and hands-on experiences. Again, in these moments, we want the child to be autonomous in their investigations of concepts and materials to inspire intrinsic motivation and deep and meaningful learning.

