

Visit Four: Structuring Your Child's Day Summary Points

- Hoping to keep your toddler on track is a good thing, but it's no substitute for a 24 hour plan.
- Without actively managing your child's day, each day can easily end up at a dead end.
- Ordering your child's world with structure and routine will not only put your child on the right track, but it will take both parent and child in the direction of satisfaction and accomplishment.
- Benefits of structure and routine:
 - You plan into your day learning opportunities rather than simply hoping your toddler will learn at random times.
 - Reduces the amount of mess you have to clean-up, whether it is a physical or behavioral mess.
 - Without structure and routine your toddler will be far more prone to get into trouble as they explore their world.
 - Toddlers love the security of the routine.
 - A daily schedule allows you to accomplish what you need to get done.
- The *Why* of the Plan:
 - More planning is required as your toddler waketime increases.
 - Toddlers require more than just supervision, they need to be directed and challenged.
 - Your child's routine should benefit the child, mom and the rest of the family.
- The *What* of the Plan
 - Worksheet 1: Family Activity Planner – list all personal and general family activities for the week.
 - Worksheet 2: Child's Activity Planner – list all the activities of your toddler's day.
 - Worksheet 3: Daily Activity Planner – looks at the time increments for all of your toddler's activities during a single day. Customize the time increments however they work best for you (15 minute, 30 minute or 1 hour blocks of time).
 - Worksheet 4: Weekly Activity Planner – Not every day will look, nor needs to look, the same. Consider the activities of all family members when completing your weekly planner.
- Be realistic about your expectations. Organizing your day will help avoid taking a tired or hungry toddler out of the home when you run errands.

- Invite your child to participate in your daily activities such as picking up toys, folding laundry or helping preparing a meal.
- Because toddlers change so quickly, the schedule you establish today is not going to look the same in three or six months.
- Staying flexible with your plan allows you to better handle unexpected disruptions that occur during day.
- Your routine is to serve you and your child, not the reverse. If your routine is creating daily stress than it is not the right routine for you.
- It is important to persevere during specific training opportunities that your toddler may not enjoy doing but you believe to be a necessary part of training.
- Train in times of non-conflict. Take advantage of the times when your toddler is already in the highchair to work on things such as sit-time or hand management.