

MARYLAND EXCELS

YOUR DAILY SCHEDULE or LESSON PLAN Opportunities to Learn, Observe, and Individualize

Learning begins the minute a child comes through your door. Every moment a child spends in your program counts. This chart shows you how even the simplest every day activities provide opportunities for interaction, teachable moments, and ways to support children's development and learning.

Use this chart to help you think about all the skills you teach children. Consider creating a similar chart that shows the specific daily activities you include in your program. A blank schedule is on page 12. Be sure to include how you individualize for different children and how you use a variety of activities to encourage children to develop and learn every day.



THINK ABOUT

Things to include in your daily schedule, plans, and routines:

- A variety of active and quiet times
- Adequate outdoor and indoor time
- Large group, small group, and individual activities
- A balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities
- Time for children to transition between activities
- Accommodations and flexibility as needed for individual children
- Picture cues that help children learn and follow routines
- Ways you support children with special needs, including IFSP/IEP goals (as appropriate)



ACTIVITY	OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT, TEACH, & LEARN	OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE	TIPS
Arrival	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children questions • Talk to children about events that occurred at home or will occur during the day • Listen to learn about children’s interests and ideas • Offer support to children as they develop new skills (unzipping coats, organizing materials) • Encourage children to welcome and help one another <p>Teach, & Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily routines • Language and Communication skills • Independence and responsibility • Organization skills • Cooperation 	<p>How children transition between caregivers, environments, activities</p> <p>Communication with others – children and adults</p> <p>Independence and organization in managing coats, belongings, routines</p> <p>Interactions with others – children and adults</p> <p>Children’s ideas and topics of interests</p>	<p>Provide places for children to store belongings</p> <p>Label storage areas, bins, and materials with pictures and print</p> <p>Provide a variety of materials for children to explore independently as others arrive</p> <p>Encourage children to interact with one another around materials/activities</p>



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Meals and Snacks	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chat about food/snacks, likes/dislikes • Label by naming objects and actions • Support children developing personal care and life skills (hand washing, pouring, setting the table) • Listen <p>Teach & Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/emotional skills – cooperation, asking for help, helping others, self-control and waiting • Language and communication skills • Healthy habits (nutrition, hand washing, using a napkin) • Motor skills – using cups, utensils, pouring • Mathematics – counting, one-to-one correspondence 	<p>Independence in personal care activities</p> <p>Communication and interactions with others – children and adults</p> <p>Ways children seek help or offer help to others</p> <p>Children’s self-control and tolerance for waiting</p>	<p>Individualize for children with special nutritional or dietary needs</p> <p>Use child size pitchers and utensils to support children’s independence</p> <p>Serve healthy foods and talk about why healthy foods are good for us</p>
Circle Time	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan meaningful activities to engage children • Encourage children to express thoughts, ideas, feelings and needs • Support children to listen to others <p>Teach & Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language and Early Literacy • Vocabulary – colors, calendar words (days of 	<p>Children’s interests and preferences</p> <p>Expression of empathy and compassion for others</p> <p>Children’s listening, attention, self-regulation (waiting), participation</p> <p>Children’s ability to follow one-step and multiple-step directions</p>	<p>Use carpet squares, placemats, cushions, or other objects to identify and distinguish each child’s place to sit</p> <p>Respect each child’s needs for “personal space” some children need more than others</p> <p>Watch the time and monitor children’s attentiveness – be flexible and adjust the length</p>



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	<p>the week, months of the year), weather words</p> <p>Print recognition – recognizing name on carpet square, color words, letters, week days, months</p> <p>Retelling stories</p> <p>Describing events or making comparisons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics <p>Counting, sequencing (days of the week, events), patterns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following and completing simple and complex directions 		<p>of circle time as needed</p> <p>Engage children in stories – ask questions, have children retell or act out parts of stories</p>
Centers	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children questions • Encourage children to describe what they are doing or explain what’s happening/why something is happening • Prompt children to make predictions or think of alternatives (“What if ... ?”) • Model language skills that encourage thinking and discovery (“I wonder...”, “What would happen if tried...”, “Let’s try ... ”) <p>Teach & Learn</p> <p>Social-Emotional Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making choices/decisions • Sharing • Working and playing with peers 	<p>Creative thinking</p> <p>Social interactions with adults and peers</p> <p>Initiative</p> <p>School readiness skills</p> <p>Problem-solving</p>	<p>Provide a variety of materials, including chubby crayons, pencil grips, or other tools that support children’s skills</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting and taking turns • Asking for help and helping others • Following and completing directions • Explore interests and develop curiosity <p><u>Literacy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretend reading and writing • Letter recognition and letter sounds • Vocabulary • Exploration/experimentation with sounds, letters, words <p><u>Mathematics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers, patterns, matching, classifying, counting • Measurement • Shapes • Estimation • Comparison • Exploration/experimentation with numbers, patterns, quantities <p><u>Science</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery, <u>curiosity</u> • Exploration/experimentation <p><u>Art</u></p>		



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small motor skills for drawing, painting, writing, using scissors, pasting/gluing • Creative expression • Exploration/experimentation with colors, shapes, textures, forms, materials <p>Dramatic Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative expression and imagination • Cooperation • Problem-solving <p>Building/Blocks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and engineering • Cooperation • Problem-solving 		
Clean Up	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model cooperation and ways to help others • Acknowledge children who are active participants in cleanup routines • Provide choices for cleanup duties as appropriate • Redirect and support children learning to transition from one activity to another <p>Teach & Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Helping others 	<p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Independence in completing routine tasks</p> <p>Sharing and cooperating with others</p> <p>Seeking help and helping others</p> <p>Following directions</p> <p>Managing routines</p>	<p>Offer individual support to children who are learning routines or need help managing tasks independently</p> <p>Provide child-size clean up equipment</p> <p>Use picture cues to help children organize and return materials to shelves/ bins/ closets</p> <p>Use music/songs to signal clean up time</p> <p>Provide adequate time for</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following directions • Self-care routines 		children to prepare to clean up and transition between activities
Outdoor play	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new games • Talk to children as they explore the outdoors • Ask children questions to learn about their interests and preferences • Be a quiet participant allowing children to initiate activities <p>Teach & Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor skills – running, jumping, hopping, skipping, throwing, catching, kicking a ball • Safety • Cooperation • Problem-solving and conflict resolution • Exploration, curiosity, and discovery • Initiating play with others • Self-control/self-regulation (Sharing, taking turns, waiting, resting) • Communication – expressing needs and desires • Following directions • Transitions 	<p>Coordination and motor development</p> <p>Interests and preferences (what types of play does a child prefer; with whom)</p> <p>Awareness of others</p> <p>Playing cooperatively with others</p> <p>Sharing equipment</p> <p>Expressing needs, seeking help, helping other</p> <p>Self-monitoring/self-regulation/self-control (taking a break when becoming over excited/stimulated)</p> <p>Transition to outdoor, active play back to indoor, quiet activities</p>	<p>Offer individual support for children who need help engaging in play with others, resolving conflicts, transitioning between activities</p> <p>Give countdown reminders or signals to help children transition after outdoor play (“Five minutes left”; “Two minutes until we go indoors”)</p> <p>Use music/songs/rhythms/hand signal to transition</p>



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Story Time	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask children questions about pictures, characters, and events in stories • Tap into children’s past experiences with events/characters in stories • Share stories written by children • Model reading with expression <p>Teach & Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Comprehension • Vocabulary • Rhyming • Communicating ideas, retelling story • Relationship between written and spoken words 	<p>Listening to ideas of others</p> <p>Contributing ideas to discussion</p> <p>Answering/asking questions, making predictions and connections</p> <p>Using pictures to understand new words</p> <p>Identifying and producing rhyming words</p>	<p>Choose stories that tap into children’s interests, background experiences, and culture</p> <p>Create puppets for children to use when retelling stories</p>
Quiet Time	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model quiet voices/whispering/non-verbal communication • Sit quietly with the children looking at your own book <p>Teach & Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routines • Transitioning from activity to quiet time • Self-control (managing self during quiet times) 	<p>Individual preferences – napping time, children who prefer quiet play to active play</p>	<p>Be sensitive to needs of individual children – provide quiet books, soft toys, puzzles, quiet drawing/coloring for non-nappers;</p> <p>Provide quiet places for children to rest or take a break as needed throughout the day</p> <p>Use softer lighting to signal quiet times</p>



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Music and Movement	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature music and dance that represents children’s background and culture • Provide instruments for children to explore rhythms and sounds • Ask children to describe music and sounds and to move to different musical rhythms and tunes • Play musical games <p>Teach & Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music appreciation • Rhythm, patterns • Singing and dancing • Healthy habits/physical activity • Coordination and complex motor movement (starting/stopping on signal, marching) • Following directions • Spatial awareness (standing next to others; jumping in place) 	<p>Musical interests and preferences</p> <p>Coordination</p> <p>Self-control</p> <p>Following simple versus complex directions</p>	<p>Build in active periods throughout the day to support children’s learning</p> <p>Provide a variety of musical and rhythm instruments for children to explore</p>
Free Choice Time	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce materials and experiences in ways that invite children to interact • Share, enjoy, and guide free choice times with children rather than direct their interaction and choices. Allow children to initiate activities. 	<p>Moving through crowded spaces</p> <p>Sharing and cooperating</p> <p>Problem-solving</p> <p>Interests</p> <p>Types of play</p>	<p>Provide a variety of materials, games, and props for children to explore</p> <p>Support children who are slow to engage by inviting them to play along. Gradually withdraw from play once children begin</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model positive problem solving and resolving conflicts as they arise <p>Teach & Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring interests and preferences • Curiosity and discovery • Planning and creating activities around interests • Persistence/attention (sticking with activities, persevering when activities become challenging) • Choice and decision making 	Social groups	to participate independently.
<p>Closing circle/ Departure</p>	<p>Interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the day on a positive note • Ask children to share a highlight of the day, something that made them feel happy or proud, something they look forward to happening the next day • Celebrate accomplishments • Send a good-bye message around the circle • Sing a song or recite a poem/rhyme together • Play group games like "I Spy" • Use supportive words to encourage and support everyone to participate <p>Teach & Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and language development 		Include everyone in the closing circle and provide individual support for children developing skills such as listening, communicating, or self-control



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	(discussing events of the day, what will happen tomorrow) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time concepts (yesterday, today, tomorrow, this week) • Personal care (putting on coats, zipping) • Organization (gathering materials and belongings for home) 		

Use the blank Daily Schedule on the next page to create a schedule that works for the children in your program. Add or delete rows as needed.

Review this article for more tips on creating a daily schedule: [Moving Right Along: Planning Transitions to Prevent Challenging Behaviors.](#)



