

This FAQ is a companion document to the *IQ Guide for Daily Schedule* and includes information to support programs in planning a daily schedule.

### **Should my Daily Schedule remain consistent throughout the year?**

While it is necessary to have a daily schedule on the first day of school, once your children arrive and you begin to use your schedule, adjustments will need to be made. You will determine the final schedule based on the children's abilities and needs. By week four or five, you should have a solid schedule in place. It may become necessary for adjustments (most minor) during the year as children begin to develop longer attention spans, independent abilities and a better understanding of classroom expectations. Remember when making changes, you should utilize the *IQ Guide for Daily Schedule* to ensure all expectations are maintained.

### **Why begin the day with Circle Time/Opening Activity?**

Circle Time/Opening Activity establishes a routine for students and provides time to focus children on the upcoming daily events. Activities should not be so redundant that students lose interest, but vary and progress throughout the year based on student interest, skill level, and needs identified through assessment data. Large group instruction can include but is not limited to the following examples:

- Literacy development/shared reading and writing
- Topic-related activities/introduction of new materials
- Story time
- Phonological awareness
- Calendar/time-sequence activities (based on student development and time-concept knowledge)
- Music with movement using props and instruments
- Morning Message Board/Daily News

### **What length of time is appropriate for Opening Activity?**

The length of time for Large Group/Opening Activity should be based on the attention span of the children. A student's ability to focus and maintain interest will increase throughout the year and the length of time should be adjusted accordingly. It is suggested to begin the year with a 10-15 minute time frame. Planning more than one Large Group during the day for shorter amounts of time is helpful in maintaining student interest and focus.

### **Must I maintain the same time slot each day for Large Group Literacy?**

Yes, it is recommended that Large Group Literacy be at the same time slot each day for consistency. At least one planned Large Group Literacy Activity (all children participating) should take place daily and be clearly defined in lesson plans. Literacy activities develop the foundation for reading and writing and both of these should be included in weekly plans. It is also important to incorporate these practices throughout the day with smaller groups of children. Remember that it is not always necessary to have all 22 children in large group literacy at the same time. It would be considered appropriate to divide the children into two groups enabling the lead teacher and assistant teacher to each have a literacy group in separate areas of the classroom.

### **What is an appropriate length of time for Large Group Literacy Activities?**

Length of time will vary depending on the planned activity and children's attention span. Generally, 10-15 minutes is ample time to introduce and complete Large Group Literacy Activities.

### **Can I have more than two story times a day?**

A minimum of two planned opportunities for story time are required, but you can always provide additional opportunities to read to children.

<b>What is an appropriate length of time for story time?</b>
The length of story time will vary based on the attention span of children, the time of year, and time of day. It is recommended that books read at the beginning of the year be shorter (5-10 minutes) and when children's ability to focus increases, longer books can be introduced. It is also appropriate to have two (2) groups of students participating in story time lead by the lead and the assistant teacher. This practice helps maintain interest and involvement in the book.
<b>How should I incorporate daily Phonological Awareness Activities into my schedule?</b>
It is necessary to provide Phonological Awareness opportunities to all children daily. Phonological Awareness Activities can be planned for both large and small group instructional times. Large group experiences are appropriate for exposure to phonological awareness. Small group settings provide an optimal instructional time that can address the varying levels of phonological awareness development and can more effectively support children's individual skills. Most teachers plan phonological awareness activities in both large and small group times each day and further utilize them during daily transitions.
<b>What length of time is appropriate for Phonological Awareness Activities?</b>
The length of time will vary, depending on the interest and skills of students in the classroom. Begin the year with shorter amounts of planned time (5-10 minutes) while increasing the time and number of activities as children gain the ability to maintain focus. Phonological awareness activities can and should be incorporated into other instructional times during the day.
<b>How much time should I plan for Small Group Activities?</b>
Time allowed for Small Group Activities should be relatively short at the beginning of the year when children are learning routines, do not have skills to maintain independent activities, or have attention spans not suitable for long periods of sitting. Move toward longer time spans as the year progresses. Most teachers find that ten to fifteen minutes is a good starting point at the beginning of the year. (Also see FAQ for Small Group on the BFTS website)
<b>What happens during daily Center Time?</b>
Learning centers represent one of the most important elements of a developmentally appropriate classroom. Carefully developed centers provide opportunities for children to become active and engaged learners. Learning centers allow students to extend thematic learning, develop concept/academic skills, and refine social, fine motor, and creative skills. Center time lends itself to both spontaneous and intentional opportunities for teachers to facilitate analysis, reasoning, predicting and planning skills. During center time, both teachers should be actively engaged with students, facilitating conversation and providing feedback. Center time can be utilized to gain insight into student interest and to scaffold learning for individuals or smaller groups of children.
<b>How much time should I plan for Center Time?</b>
The schedule should reflect no less than one full hour of uninterrupted time for children to play in self-selected learning areas each day. The 60 minutes <u>cannot</u> be broken up into smaller increments of time. Children are allowed to move freely between centers based on child choice and cannot be timed or be required to rotate between centers. Children should not be limited in numbers in centers unless it is for a safety precaution or a smaller center where materials would be an issue (sensory table, loft, listening center, flannel board or computer). <b>Activities such as clean-up should be clearly defined and are in addition to the minimum of one full hour block of time.</b> If center time is extended beyond the required 60 minutes to accommodate small group instruction at the beginning or end, this should be clearly documented on the daily schedule and lesson plans.
<b>Where do Music and Movement Activities belong in my schedule?</b>
Opportunities for children to participate in music with gross (large) motor movement should occur daily. Music with movement can occur during a specifically planned time, but can also be incorporated into other blocks of time (Large Group, Closing, and transitions). It is required that at least one planned opportunity for children to interact with music along with a gross motor activity be documented in lesson plans; however music and movement is important for young children and could be used throughout the day.

**What length of time is appropriate for music with movement activities?**

The length of time will vary based on attention span of children, the time of day and time of year. Be flexible in your planning of music and movement by watching the children's reactions and involvement. Children naturally enjoy and respond to music so remember to use music as a way to smoothly move through transitions during the day.

**Why do we need rest time?**

Rest time allows children's bodies and minds to rest and recharge. Not all children sleep during rest time and those who do not fall asleep should be given quiet activities to occupy them while others are resting. Rest time should be no longer than sixty (60) minutes. Teachers can adjust rest time according to students' needs throughout the school year. Many teachers choose to shorten the amount of rest time as a Kindergarten Transition Activity. Pay close attention to the needs of individual children and adjust accordingly the length of time and expectations of whole group rest or individual rest periods.

**Why is outdoor play required and what should occur during this time?**

Outdoor play supports development of basic social skills and gross motor skills. Rolling, crawling, running, climbing and swinging are all critical activities for young children. Provide materials such as balls, tricycles, and balance beams to encourage movement, and take appropriate learning center materials outside to encourage constructive play. Rotate materials for outdoor use to maintain interest. Both teachers are expected to be actively engaged with students during outdoor play time.

**What length of time is required for outdoor play?**

The length of time appropriate for students to engage in outdoor play will vary and may be determined by a master schedule for the program. There is no specific time limit, however a general guide suggests approximately thirty to sixty (30 to 60) minutes of outdoor time daily. More or less time is acceptable dependent on schedule flexibility.

**What length of time should be scheduled for closing activities?**

The length of time will vary but generally only five to fifteen (5-15) minutes is needed to implement closing activities.

**Why do I need a schedule for children posted in the classroom?**

A schedule with pictures that children can manipulate helps facilitate knowledge of the daily routine and is a pre-requisite for the concepts "telling time" and learning sequence. This provides security and gives children a sense of control over their daily events. Some teachers choose to use this as a classroom job. Routine is necessary for a calm and productive environment. A schedule posted in the classroom for adult reference helps visitors know what they should expect to see when visiting.

**What is the difference between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities?**

Teacher-directed activities are those activities that are led by the teacher and the teacher has control of the lesson and materials. Some examples include opening and closing activities, large group instruction, small group instruction, and so on.

Child-initiated refers to the activities in which the children have the opportunity to freely choose materials and what they will do with them. For example, during centers, the child may choose to work in the block area and build roads, while another student chooses to paint at the art easel.

**Why is it important to have a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities on the daily schedule?**

Providing a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities is important because it allows teachers to ensure they are covering key skills in a more structured way while also recognizing children's interests and using that information for skill-building as well. Teacher-directed activities are important so that teachers have planned opportunities to develop children's skills in vital areas, such as social and emotional development, phonological awareness, small motor skills, etc. Including child-initiated activities improves student engagement and can lead to more teachable moments that are significant to children. When teachers plan time throughout the day to take students' interests into account, children become more involved and take more ownership of their learning experiences, creating more opportunities for meaningful and effective teacher-child interactions.

When making their daily schedule, teachers should consider the balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed they are providing throughout the day.