

A Preschool Daily Schedule with notes to focus play at home

8:00-10:30 Morning invitations/AM Snack/Try to go...

As children get up and get ready for their day with you at home, keeping a morning routine in some ways similar to normal life will help them feel secure even in this strange time of not going anywhere. Try and encourage independence by letting your child choose what to wear and get dressed on their own or monitoring toothpaste on the brush as your child attempts it themselves *"Remember, just a little..."* Along the lines of a routine, each morning at PIC during this time, a wide variety of activities make up invitations to play. Here are some thematic ideas drawn from PIC classrooms that could work at home:

-Exploring Loose Parts such as muffin tins or ice cube trays with buttons, bottle caps, or dried beans, or taping markers or crayons to small cars and driving them across paper to create a map, or tearing up old newspaper, soaking it in water and then smooshing it together into balls (you could add seeds or dried beans!) to let dry (and plant!).

-Counting and Sorting with wooden clothespins on stretched string, or small bags for filling and dumping pieces of fabric/paper, weaving pipe cleaners/yarn/twine into a metal colander or old piece of screen, or balling up tinfoil pieces and seeing how many can be tossed into a soup pot.

-Sensory activities such as setting up a tray with shaving cream and adding small cars/animals/other small objects to explore, or making playdough/slime/oobleck with your child (most teachers have shared their sensory recipes) and adding plastic knives for cutting and coffee filters and candles for birthday cakes. Try encouraging children to water plants with a watering can/spray bottle, or freezing small toys in a bowl of water overnight before letting your preschooler excavate with whatever tools or water source they choose.

-Exploring sound and movement by freeze dancing to a favorite song where you stop the music to freeze your dancing child, or by placing kitchen utensils (metal and wooden) with pots together to produce and differentiate sound, or by filling different sized jars/tupperwares with water to then hear different tones from when played with a wooden spoon, or ringing a bell or gong and carefully listening and putting up a hand when your child hears the ringing stop.

-Reading books and writing lists/children's names with old favorites and newer more challenging books both at the ready and/or with marker/pencil and paper/clipboard (easy to make from cardboard and a rubber band) at the ready. The letters in your child's name, your name, and the names of friends we miss are great places to practice letters.

-Building with blocks/legos/duplos/magnatiles, or anything that stacks, makes a ramp, or topples lightly enough that it damages neither child nor home.

Also remember that teachers are always uploading new and thematic invitation ideas and prompts to the remote learning google drive for families.

Around 9:15-9:30, and at a natural pausing place for your child in what they are engaged in, a reminder to use the bathroom and wash hands with care (scrubbing soap while singing or counting) should always precede morning snack as it does at PIC. As they are in the middle of Choice Time, children don't need to clean up toys before snack, and should be assured that they can return to their work. As at school, times to sit and eat together are important for children's focus and growth along with being the perfect time to chat with you, talk about where food comes from, count pieces of fruit or bites, and practice pouring their own drink as independently as possible. *"I'll hold the cup, you pour carefully"* Once finished with snack, children can resume playing with invitations until morning meeting.

10:30-11:00 Clean Up Time/Morning Meeting

The children are encouraged to work together in cleaning up the classroom at PIC, and can be helped to do so at home with talk about taking care of our toys and learning where everything we play with can be stored. *"Which basket do the train tracks go in? Or "What might happen to your markers if we leave all the caps off?"* As you have seen in your child's classroom's online learning, we engage in a variety of activities like singing, sharing, building, dancing, stretching, poetry reading, story time, list making, multi-modal activities and group discussion during Morning Meeting. If your preschooler is not as interested in Zoom meetings or videos during this time please feel no guilt, you can pick any one of these activities to try with your child one-on-one, with a goal of joyful interaction and not requiring your child to focus for longer than they want to.

11:00-12:00 Outdoor/Gross Motor Play

At PIC we play outdoors everyday, for at least some amount of time, rain or shine - and getting outside in safe ways during this home-time is just as important. Outside time (with appropriate social distancing measures) may include walks around the block, walks to a specific spot that will not be crowded, bike rides/scooting, or simply being on a porch or under an umbrella when it is rainy. *"Do you hear the rain falling - what does it sound like?"*, *"There's ANOTHER big puddle! Have you soaked your socks yet?"*, *"How many yellow flowers do you think we can count on our block?"*, *"Which of those two rocks is bigger?"* Bringing out chalk, tape, or containers/trays can extend play outdoors and get your child interacting with their environment in ways that include collecting, mixing, sorting, examining, burying, and playing imaginatively.

12:00-1:00 Lunch, Bathroom, Calming Bodies

Children and teachers sit together for a family style meal for lunch at PIC, and there is a lot of conversation and many teachable moments that happen when we eat together. You can do this too with your preschooler at home, and remember that a picnic lunch can be outside or inside and still be special. After lunch, another trip to the bathroom to try and go, wash hands, and brush teeth are the norm in school, and a good idea whether your preschooler is napping or not.

1:00-3:00 Rest Time

When at school children listen to soft music or stories and teachers may also read chapter books until children fall asleep. Children who do not sleep or require little sleep are offered quiet activities on their cots and at tables once all children have had time to try and fall asleep. This has been one of the trickiest times of the day to navigate for my Bluejay Elliot, as at school he willingly reads, rests, and sleeps with his peers - but now at home with just us it is

where he resists us and tries to assert his power most. Children do need downtime mid day, even if they do not sleep, so it may make sense to set the stage for a nap but only ask that your child does quiet puzzles, drawing, or looks at books. If Elliot falls asleep he is a joy until a very late bedtime, and if not he is a grouch, but goes to sleep early. We try to count both options as a win:).

3:00-4:30 Table Activities, Bathroom, PM Snack

The afternoons are a return to the morning's invitations to play. It's a great chance to provide intriguing materials that you or your child think might be fun to explore. Think about items you've potentially got around the house such as:

-envelopes, paper, paper clips, rubber bands	Legos, bricks, blocks
-pots, pans, bowls, cups	Tinfoil, wax paper, parchment paper
-chopsticks, whisks, spatulas, toothpicks, wooden spoons	Crayons, markers, pastels, chalk
-uncooked pasta in different shapes, cinnamon sticks or cloves, flour or cornmeal and water,	child safe scissors, spray bottles, eye droppers
-glue, paint, brushes, sponges	magnifying glasses, calculators
-cardboard tubes, boxes, egg cartons	Old keyboards, scrabble pieces,
-newspaper, receipts, magazines	muffin tins, large magnets, bolts, washers
-bottle tops, caps, corks	Tupperware, shoe boxes, nesting containers
-rinsed clean tin cans, thick glass bottles	String, fabric, cotton balls
-rocks, shells, sticks, acorns, bark, dandelions, flower petals, fallen leaves	Any playdough or slime you might have tried to cook up from online or a teacher shared recipe

Using the bathroom, washing hands, and having snack, just like we did in the morning, will continue to keep up a routine that we will (hopefully) resume again soon. I hope this guide is helpful as our time at home continues!

Below is a link to an article that might shed some light on how children cope with stress and how we can further support them. I encourage you to read it - it has been immensely helpful in understanding my Elliot's emotional and psychological response to the disruption and upheaval brought about by quarantine. I also want to be sure and broadcast that part of being a good parent is being kind to yourself and remembering that a well loved child is the ultimate goal, whatever the circumstances.

[NYT parenting - Why is my big kid acting like a toddler?](#)