

What is Early Care & Learning?

Supporting each child's unique path to healthy cognitive, social-emotional and physical development requires nurturing care and stimulating learning opportunities from all primary caregivers in the child's life. For children in child care, early educators play a central role in defining the early experiences that shape their development.



A Day in the Life of an Early Educator

6:30 - 7 AM

- Set up classroom and gather supplies for the day
- Prepare breakfast for the children
- Update classroom bulletin board with resources & information for parents
- Field phone calls from parents reporting absences and trouble-shoot staffing needs

7 - 9 AM

- Welcome children and their families
 - Coffee available for parents to encourage social connections
 - Assist parents with parenting questions/concerns

7 - 8 AM

- Support children in practicing washing their hands
- Daily "health check" of each child to identify potential concerns such as recent illness or injury and prevent the transmission of infectious disease. All information/observations documented
- Children eat a healthy family-style breakfast
- Support children in practicing brushing their teeth
- Diapering/toilet training
- Washing hands

Developing a regular hand-washing routine promotes good hygiene and public health.

8 - 8:30 AM

- Circle Time: A teacher-led literacy activity such as songs and rhyming, counting, emergent topic discussion; quiet play available for children who choose not to participate

Administer breathing treatment for child with asthma

8:30 - 9:30 AM

- Small group play to promote learning, fine motor development and social and emotional skills, such as communication and sharing

9:30 - 10 AM

- Diapering/toileting
- Wash hands
- Snack preparation (may involve cooking)
- Eat snack
- Wash hands

Activities include: puzzles; legos; duplos; toy cars, people & trucks; stringing beads; cards; pegboards; dramatic play; sand and water tables; sensory bins; math, science & nature activities; art and creative activities, computer and library centers.



10 - 11 AM

- Outdoor and indoor "gross motor play": running, crawling, climbing, rolling, dancing

Early interventionists (speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist) arrive to work with child(ren) with special needs.

11 - 11:15 AM

- Diapering/toileting
- Wash hands
- Prepare lunch

Interventionists work closely with the early educator to set goals for each child and discuss how to best meet their needs on a daily basis in the classroom.

11:15 - 11:35 AM

- Family-style lunch: children sit together at the table and practice sharing and helping themselves to prepared food.

11:35 - Noon

- Clean up lunch
- Story time
- Prepare for nap

Family-style meals promote development of social skills, self-help skills and independence, and learning about healthy food choices.



Noon - 2 PM

- Nap/quiet time: 1-2 hours recommended for healthy development, depending on age/health needs



Teacher uses this time to:

- Prepare a daily report describing each child's day
- Call/meet with parents, a pre-K coordinator, an early childhood mental health consultant or a wellness nurse
- Develop lesson plans which meet the Vermont Early Learning Standards and goals for individual children
- Disinfect toys from morning play
- Create weekly newsletter which includes invitation to a Family Night event
- Research community resources for family who have identified needs (such as fuel assistance, affordable housing, substance abuse recovery, addressing domestic violence, information about a food shelf)

2 - 2:30 PM

- Diapering/toileting
- Wash hands
- Prepare & eat snack
- Wash hands

2:30 - 3 PM

- Reading circle and quiet activities

3 - 5 PM

- Small group & individual play
- Outdoor or indoor gross motor play
- Diapering/toileting
- Wash hands

3:30 - 5 PM

- Parents arrive and children depart



This is an important check in time for parents. The provider and parent talk about the child's day and what's been happening at home, and the provider shares guidance and resources on positive parenting and child development.

5 - 5:30 PM

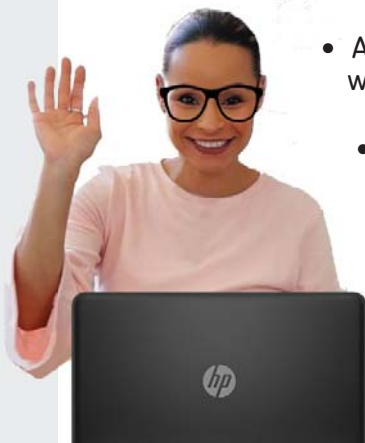
- Parent conference to discuss developmental screening
- Record observations of children into child development assessment computer program
- Clean classroom and prepare for next day

6 - 9 PM

- Attend professional development training on how to best support children who have experienced trauma

9:30 PM

- Complete administrative tasks such as payroll, bookkeeping, ordering supplies, etc.



This is just a sample of a day in the life of an early educator, and excludes many details inherent to caring for a diverse group of children. It's important to consider provider to child ratios when imagining this responsibility: at a center, each teacher may be responsible for up to 4 infants, 5 toddlers, or 10 pre-kindergarteners!