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

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| 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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |

Developing a regular hand-washing routine promotes good hygiene and public health.
Family-style lunch: children sit together at the table and practice sharing and helping themselves to prepared food.

Clean up lunch
Story time
Prepare for nap

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)

Diapering/toileting
Wash hands
Prepare & eat snack
Wash hands

Reading circle and quiet activities

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

Parents arrive and children depart

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

Attend professional development training on how to best support children who have experienced trauma
Complete administrative tasks such as payroll, bookkeeping, ordering supplies, etc.

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

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!