



Provincial Outreach Program for Students with Deafblindness

Elements of a Good Routine at School

When we evaluate routines, good ones tend to reflect most, if not all these 13 elements.

1. **A "Functional Purpose."** The routine should make sense in one of the four ways - Self Care, Recreational, Helping in the Community, or Inclusion.
2. **A Cue.** The cue represents a specific routine.
3. **Participation from Set-up to Clean Up.** The student does not sit and wait for the Good Fairy who makes things appear and disappear. The learner is physically involved in getting and organizing materials and then putting away and cleaning up. Many of the best opportunities for working on educational goals occur in the set-up and clean up portion of routines.
4. **Need for Expressive Communication.** Every routine of the day should develop the learner's disposition to communicate expressively.
5. **Need for Receptive Communication.** Learners normally learn to understand language because of hearing words and sentences used frequently and interactively in context. Daily routines are ideal context for language learning. Appropriate verbal, object, and sign labels along with brief verbal descriptions should be paired in a consistent, predictable manner with what is happening in the routine. This input, repeated over and over, helps the learner develop comprehension skills. Observe and expect specific responses to cue words, signs, and symbols.
6. **Interaction with Others Besides the Intervenor.** Social and communication skills develop with interactions with the Intervenor and with peers and other adults in the school and community. The interactions may be scripted so the roles are clear for each party, or they may be facilitated by the Intervenor who creates a topic.
7. **Purposeful Use of Hands (or head or feet).** The student's hands make things happen in the routine. Hands do the taking and putting, opening, closing, and using of objects.
8. **Purposeful Use of Vision.** What visual function does the learner need to develop to become a more active participant in the routines of the school day?
9. **Purposeful Use of Hearing.** What auditory function does the learner need to become a more active participant in the routines of the school day?
10. **Purposeful Use of Other Senses.** Touch, smell, taste, proprioception, and balance may be important in helping the learner make sense and participate actively in the routines of the day.
11. **Purposeful Use of Large Muscles.** The opportunity here is to work on Gross Motor goals in the context of all the functional routines of the day.
12. **Purposeful Use of Mobility.** The learner does not stay in one place during the routine but has reasons to move in the environment. For the learner who is developing independent mobility, the routine gives it purpose.
13. **Motivation for the Student.** Motivation is the magic ingredient. The learner will do amazing feats of learning and developing if his/her motivation is high. What aspects of the routine does the learner love? Does it make use of known likes of the learner and sugar-coat known dislikes? Does it make sense to the learner? Is there a concrete purpose or product the learner can understand and value? Is it fun?

By Gerald Harris. Updated.

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