

The Power of Predictability

As hectic as life is most days, parents are often more concerned with getting everything done instead of strategically planning out their day so that it is predictable for their children. Knowing what activities to expect each day and knowing how parents will respond at the moment is critical in helping children feel safe. The consistency in this will ease children's moods and minimize the chances of a meltdown. Therefore, parents should establish predictability in their daily routines to ensure children have the best chances of a **successful** day.

When children are unsure of what to expect daily, they often become more anxious and, therefore, demanding their parents' time. Stress goes up, self-regulation goes down, and **meltdowns** ensue. This leads to more reactive parenting, which feeds into an already difficult situation in which no one comes out happy. When this is a typical daily pattern, children develop more insecurities as the unknown of what the day will bring or how their parents will react is uncertain. Children's **temperament** also contributes to how they handle things, their **attachment** to their parents, and the **parenting** style. The combination of these things can either make or break the day.

Predictability involves repeating patterns to create a consistent environment that fosters self-regulation and growth. The developing brain thrives on repetition, so when a child experiences a positive and predictable environment, they are less **stressed**, are better able to **regulate** their emotions, and are more open to learning. It makes parenting more effortless in the long run but only when parents are consistent in their responses to situations that arise. This ultimately takes away the guessing game for children and leaves them feeling more secure. Therefore, consistency and predictability in place benefit children and parents as well.

To begin, parents must implement strategies at home that are predictable. By doing this, children will feel calmer and safer and like they can conquer the outside world with confidence.

- 1) Morning Routines: Mornings can be one of the most challenging times for families. The rush to get everyone ready for work and school and leave on time is often a challenge. Creating a morning routine that is quiet and consistent provides children with a clear mind, which leads to a better ability to retain new information they learn in school.
- 2) Midday Routines: After a long day of being away from their parents, children need time to reconnect. Taking just 10 minutes of dedicated time together can relieve any stress from the day and help them prepare for any evening activities.
- 3) Nighttime Routines: At night, children need time to calm down from the day's busyness and relax. Having predictable routines in place will help quiet their minds, so they feel secure will fall asleep easier.

Again, the key to creating an environment for any of these things is the predictability of it. When children can trust that these things will happen every day, they will feel more secure and self-regulate. However, if there is an expected change to a routine, parents must prepare children ahead of time. This will alleviate any unneeded stress and allow children to prepare.

The **SKILLZ** Child Development Centers created their classroom structure based on predictability. The class layout is the same each day, so children know what to expect. Children also feel secure with the **Certified** Pediatric Ninja Specialists who run each class because they are consistent in implementing **reinforcement** and expectations in the classroom setting. The Parent SKILLZ supplemental curriculum also provides parents with ways to strengthen the parent-child bond through consistency and connection, which is vital in creating a predictable environment.

Appreciation for a predictable routine is vital to creating an environment in which children feel safe and secure. By doing this, children's self-regulation skills increase, and stress is minimized. The calmness that comes with this gives children the best opportunity to more confidently take on life's challenges.