



LEARNINGbyte

EI Service Delivery

Weaving in Routines



PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

This activity is designed to help break down routines and understand how they relate to brain development. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the child's and caregiver's feelings during routines. Participants will highlight ways to naturally enhance learning opportunities that occur during daily routines.



RESOURCES NEEDED

- Ball of yarn
- Scissors



SPECIFIC STEPS

1. Ask for eight volunteers from the group to form a large circle with everyone facing inward. The remaining participants can stand behind the circle.
2. Begin by asking participants to name a routine (ex. Brushing teeth, bed time, getting dressed, walking to the car, etc.). Give the child a name such as "Johnny."
3. Instruct participants, *"We will be tossing the yarn to each other. When the yarn is tossed to you, hold onto the end before you toss the ball to the next person."* (Note: As participants throw from one person to the next, a tight web will begin to form in the circle).
4. Facilitator will begin by **sharing an experience a child might have during this routine** with caregivers. (If the routine chosen is bed time, an example will be "Johnny will pick out a book for mom to read.") After sharing the experience, the facilitator will hold the end of the yarn and toss the yarn ball to someone across the circle, who will share another experience that could happen during the routine before tossing the yarn ball to the next person. Continue a few times.
5. Then, ask them to pause. Ask participants to **add a feeling the child may experience** during this routine. (ex. Johnny is frustrated because he wants to stay up and watch a movie. Johnny feels safe when he holds his lovey.) Continue talking about Johnny's feelings during a few more tosses and ask them to pause again.
6. Next, instruct participants to share **how the caregiver may be feeling** during this routine. Continue this step a few times and pause again.
7. Next, ask participants to share something that might be going on in the house/environment such as lights are lowered for bed time, older siblings are doing homework, cars driving by, etc. Continue a few times.
8. Instruct the last participant to throw the yarn ball back to you. A nicely woven web of yarn should be made in the middle.

9. Process activity.
 - Ask participants: *Think about Johnny's brain. What do you think this web represents? (Answer: brain connections).*
 - *Wow, look at this web of connections we've created within this one routine. We know children learn through their experiences, and there are so many aspects of every experience that affect a child's brain development, such as how the child and parent are feeling, what's happening in the environment, how the parent and child interact, etc. There were so many aspects in this one little routine that the parent could use to build brain development.*
10. Ask participants:
 - *What type of physical and sensory experiences did this child have during his routine?*
 - *How were the caregivers feeling?*
 - *What was going on in the environment during this routine?*
11. Let's think about the child's feelings and what we know about brain development.
 - *What types of negative feelings did the child experience during this routine? (frustration, anger, impatient)*
 - *With each negative feeling, the facilitator cuts one strand of yarn. This represents pruning neural connections.*
12. Ask participants:
 - *How can we support the caregivers and child during this routine?*
 - *How can we help the caregiver make it a positive experience that grows healthy brain connections for the child? Consider all aspects of the routine – emotions, environmental factors, interactions, etc.*

As we can see, there is value in supporting families during this routine to make it a positive experience and enhance what is already going on.

Note: Facilitator may do this activity again by choosing a different routine to help participants think deeper about the various steps in one routine.