

"Our Day Is Back!" Routine Play Cards



How to Use:

Print on card stock and/or laminate for longer use.

These routine cards are designed to help children reconnect to daily structure after time away through play, movement, and connection. They are not meant to rush children or enforce compliance. Instead, they support predictability and emotional safety.

Getting Started:

Choose 2–3 routine cards to focus on at a time. Introducing too many at once can feel overwhelming. Select the routines that are most challenging or most important to your day. Review the cards before the routine begins, not during moments of stress. Children are more likely to engage when they are calm and curious.

Using the Cards with Children:

- Show the card and name the routine.
 - "This card shows what happens next in our day."
- Read the simple phrase aloud and invite children to repeat it if they want.
 - Repetition helps children feel secure and confident.
- Invite a playful action connected to the routine.
 - Let children help choose or model the movement (clap, stretch, tiptoe).
- Transition together.
 - Move into the routine as a group rather than sending children ahead alone.

During the Routine:

Use the card as a reminder, not a command. Point to it, hold it up, or place it at eye level. Keep language short and calm:

- "First clean up, then we play again."
- "We're getting ready for group time together."
 - Avoid using the cards to correct or discipline. Their purpose is to support understanding, not enforce behavior.

If Children Struggle:

Struggling after a break is expected. If children resist or become dysregulated:

- Slow down the transition
- Repeat the phrase calmly
- Offer to do the movement together
- Stay close and reassuring

Needing extra support just means children are relearning.

Using at Home:

Families can use these cards:

- During morning routines
- Before leaving the house
- When returning to childcare or school schedules

Post them on the fridge, carry one in a bag, or keep them near daily routines.

Important Reminder for Adults:

Routines build confidence when they are predictable and supportive. If a day feels messy, return to connection first. Children learn routines best when adults are calm, patient, and consistent, not when things are rushed.

ARRIVAL

We're here.
We're safe.



CLEAN UP

First we clean,
then we...



GROUP TIME

We come together.



OUTDOOR PLAY

Our bodies get exercise.



MEALTIME

We sit. We eat. We talk.



REST

Our brains and bodies
relax

