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## Developing a Routine Quick Reference Guide

A routine is simply a set of sequential behaviors students (or teachers) can follow independently. Routines maximize structure and predictability in the classroom, reduce time spent on transition activities, and encourage students to self-manage their behavior. It is beneficial to establish routines for transitions and frequently occurring activities (see examples below). Steps of the routine should be operationally defined action statements telling students what to DO. Limit routines to no more than 4 or 5 steps to prevent confusion.

Students learn classroom routines through explicit teacher instruction and opportunities for practice. Teachers should reinforce students for following routines by acknowledging when students successfully follow the routine and provide corrective feedback when students make errors in following the routine. Visual aids (e.g., posters) and/or signals (e.g., key phrase, bell) may help remind students when a routine should be followed.

### Helpful Tips

- It is critical that routines are taught to students with opportunities for practice. You can have a lot of fun with students by acting out examples and non-examples. Always end role playing with examples of the behaviors you wish to see. Consider having students make a poster of the routine steps.
- Reinforcement for using the routine correctly will increase the likelihood students will repeat the behavior. Give praise statements, high-fives, or private positive feedback when students follow the routine.
- Provide corrective feedback when students miss steps or forget to follow the routine. This is best done in a quiet voice to prevent student embarrassment and escalation. Check in with students to troubleshoot frequently missed steps. More clarification or practice may be necessary.
- Routines are the key to an organized and well-managed classroom. Use the routines you establish consistently. Students will become confused if you do not support the routine (e.g., folders are not in the bin where students were instructed to look).