How to Use pictures to represent daily activities & events.
Keep the pictures in a single vertical line.
Use this visual timetable every day and be consistent.
Place it in a basket or bag.
Use the same picture format for everything (all photos or all cartoons, not a mix).
Use a ‘choice’ card for free time / stations etc. Choices can be made from relevant pictures or objects elsewhere.
Use a ‘surprise’ card for fun changes and introduce an ‘oops’ card for unexpected and less pleasant changes.

How to Schedule

Encourage movement.
Minimize visual distractions that are unrelated to circle time.
Turn off all background noise and only use music intentionally and not when it is competing with your voice.
Provide visual and tactile boundaries for circle time – use brightly colored spots, floor seating or consider using a large box stuffed with a comfy blanket for the child who cannot maintain an upright posture on the carpet.
Build activities around topics of interest to the children.
Rhythm and repetition are your friend. Use songs and rhymes to support routines. Learn the circle time routine together and only ever change one thing at a time.

How to CULTIVATE A REGULATED Classroom

Identify the stressors in the environment and reduce as many as you can – these may include noise, lighting, movement, decorations, flooring patterns etc.
Slow everything down—allow time to build understanding and cultivate intrinsic motivation.
Make recognizing and discussing feelings a normal part of classroom life. Use an emotions chart or similar resource. Emotions are welcome. Emotions help us understand what we need to do.
Check in with your body – are you feeling calm and organized? What can you do to recover and maintain your own regulation?

How to BUILDING A SENSORY INFORMED CLASSROOM

Make sure children are sitting in chairs and at tables that fit their body. (feet should be flat on floor or foot boards)
Turn off all background noise and minimize visual distractions.
Collaborate with parents/food prep team to ensure snacks are always preferred foods. (School can be a difficult place to learn to eat new foods.)
Use simple containers that are easy to hold, open and close. Ensure success.
Prioritize regulation over food consumption.
Never force feed. Allow children to spit out foods they are struggling to chew/swallow or that is not working for them.

How to HAVE Snack Time SUCCESS

How to MAKE Circle Time A SUCCESS
BUILDING A SENSORY INFORMED CLASSROOM

Child development, school success, relational health, mental health, well-being and resilience are all profoundly impacted by our body’s ability to process and integrate sensation.

Make a Difference
for your students with these tips and best practices for a sensory-informed early childhood classroom.

FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCES VISIT WWW.SENSORYHEALTH.ORG