

ROUTINES THAT BUILD CONNECTION

Eight Practices to Co-create Meaningful Classroom Rituals

Creating routines *with* children instead of for them plants the seeds of trust, belonging, and shared joy. Co-created rituals reflect the voices, rhythms, and identities of your classroom community. These practices invite you to notice children's unique interests, preferences, and wonderings, and to embed your days together with heartfelt anchors.

Start by Watching Closely

Notice what children naturally do during transitions, greetings, or group time. Rituals grow best from rhythms already present.

Listen for Repetition

What songs, phrases, or gestures do children repeat on their own? These often hold emotional resonance and can anchor shared routines.

Honor Home Languages and Cultures

Invite children to incorporate words, gestures, or cultural cues from families' home environments as part of your rituals.

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Invite input with prompts like, "What helps you feel ready?" or "What should we do when a classmate is not here at school?"

Include Children in Naming the Ritual

Whether it's the "Sunshine Circle" or cue to "be as quiet as ninjas," a child-created name or phrase adds ownership and delight.

Adapt for Accessibility and Inclusion

Ensure that every child can participate fully, including those with communication, mobility, or sensory differences.

Observe Emotional Response

Pay attention to how children react. Do they light up, settle in, or seem unsure? Use your insights to adjust responsively.

Celebrate the Collective Creation

Acknowledge when a ritual becomes your own. Frame it as something the class created together and continue nurturing that pride. Share your ritual with your families and your wider school community!