Family Child Care Daily Schedule
(adapted from Dodge, Rudick, & Colker, 2009, pp.43-51)

1. **Arrival time:** Children arrive at different times, and you may be getting your own children ready for the bus or school.
   - Plan something interesting for children to do independently (books, story tapes, music, and table toys work well). Some child care providers have special “hello” boxes or toys that children use at arrival.
   - Encourage children to begin choice time as soon as they clean up their place at the breakfast table.
   - Use arrival as a learning time: Have a check-in sheet with each child's name so they learn to recognize their names in print.
   - Make sure school-age children have everything they need to start their day at school.

2. **Group times:** At different times of the day, you may want to gather all the children together for a group time. Group time should be interactive and engaging. You may read a story, sing songs, and do finger plays, engage in conversations with children, or introduce new materials.
   - Plan ahead for group times. Know what you want to accomplish and have any needed materials ready (putting them on a nearby tray is a good organizational tool)
   - Keep large group times short. They may be very short (especially if you care for toddlers and young 3-year-olds). The group times may go longer as the children mature. Take your cues from their interest and enthusiasm.

3. **Choice time:** This is the time when children choose what they want to do, what to play with, and whom to be with. Choice time is typically for one hour per day and is when much learning takes place. While children are engaged, you talk with them, make responsive comments, engage in play, ask open-ended questions, and extend their learning.
   - Plan choice time. By observing and listening to the children, you learn what interests they have. Plan experiences that extend children's interests and help them develop in the areas of dramatic play, math, literacy, science, social studies, technology, and the arts.
   - Help children learn to make choices. Interact with children by talking with them.
   - Allow enough time. Meaningful learning cannot be rushed. A longer choice time allows children to engage in learning.
   - Add new props and materials as children's interests change. Remember to rotate materials monthly.
4. **Cleanup time.** Cleaning up can be a challenge. Use these strategies to make clean up go smoothly:
   - Handle cleanup playfully. Use a song, music, or a game to help children clean up.
   - Remember that cleaning up is a learning experience for children.
   - Give children a warning. Let them know in a few minutes they will have to stop and clean up.
   - Label the environment so children know where materials belong.
   - Remind children to clean up as they finish using materials.
   - Help children understand that cleaning up is everyone’s job. We are a community and everyone helps.

5. **Going outdoors.** Children get ready to go outside. They use the toilet, wash their hands, have diapers changed, put on coats, and so on. Outdoors, children play in the yard or you go to a nearby playground.
   - Store outer clothing near the door
   - Encourage older children to assist younger children
   - Have extra hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens
   - Minimize wait time. Sing songs and do finger plays as you help children dress to go outside.

6. **Transition indoors and have a read-aloud time.** Children come inside, use the bathroom, have a diaper check or change, and wash hands. Children participate actively in a read-aloud time. They can then look at books or do other quiet activities as you prepare lunch.

7. **Lunch.** Involve children with setting the table and serving food. Bring infants’ high chairs to the table so they can be part of the social experience. Eat with the children family style. Children assist with clean-up after lunch.

8. **Nap time and afternoon snack.** Children transition to nap and rest time.
   - As children wake up they use the bathroom and wash hands.
   - Infants’ diapers are checked and changed.
   - Children eat snacks. School-age children arrive and help themselves to a snack.
   - Everyone cleans up snacks and chooses an afternoon activity

9. **Afternoon choice time and outdoor play.** This is a time for active indoor and outdoor play for all children, including school-age. This is also a good time to offer a special project for school-age children.

10. **Transition and afternoon meeting.**
    - Children either clean up from choice time or transition back indoors
    - Have a short group time to talk about the day and make plans for tomorrow, read a story, sing songs.
11. **End of day.** Children go home at different times. They are engaged in quiet activities (books, table toys, listen to stories on CD) until their families arrive.