

Scheduling Scenarios

As a manager, you may run into challenges balancing individual classroom needs and schedules with your larger staffing schedule. You may also get scheduling requests from staff that you need to address in other ways. Read these scenarios and think about how you would respond.

Please know these are potential responses, but you must adhere to your operational manuals or program standards.

Joey's 5:40 p.m. feeding

Renee approaches you about her daily struggle each evening. A 6-month-old in her classroom, Joey, has his final bottle of the day at 5:40 p.m. During this time, Renee typically has two to three other infants with her, all under 12 months of age. Renee's co-teacher, Gill, leaves at 5:30 p.m. Renee finds it difficult to feed Joey and attend to the other infants, and says that she often finds she must temporarily put Joey down to help the other children. She has tried feeding Joey on her lap so she can sit close to the other children. She asks if it is possible to have another staff member in the room during this time to help feed Joey. What steps might you take to help Renee?

- *Reassure Renee that you appreciate that she brought this problem to your attention and that you, and your trainers or coaches will work on a solution to better support her and the children.*
- *Ensure that staff members are never out of ratio; look at possible staffing arrangements:*
 - *Look at the children's typical drop-off times, consider shifting Gill's schedule if possible, could he come and leave a little later?*
 - *Is there another staff member that could come in for 15-20 minutes at the end of the day to assist with Joey's bottle? Recognizing that these are infants, selecting a consistent staff member to come in each afternoon will help decrease stranger anxiety.*
 - *Is there a way to combine classrooms and staff in the evening that would be respectful of the children, families and staff? Could two young infant classrooms merge? If this is necessary, work with your trainers, coaches, and the staff in both rooms to support the children and families who may feel less secure when transitioning between rooms.*
- *If the ratio is acceptable, ask your trainers or coaches to help this classroom with additional strategies to support Renee at the end of the day*
 - *Adaptations to the design of the environment?*
 - *Appropriate and varied materials to help the other children who are not eating?*
 - *Ask Gill and Renee to work together to have everything in place—Joey's bottle ready, a small safe area set up for the infants to explore—before Gill leaves for the day*
- *Follow up to ensure that the changes or modifications chosen are supporting Renee and the children.*

Carol's Concerns

One afternoon during a program walk through you notice one of your teachers, Carol, in distress. She is leading a large group of school-agers in some fitness routines in the gymnasium and seems to struggle with the fact that many children are not participating and instead seem drawn to the commotion behind them. Another staff member is attending to Jillian, a 10-year-old girl with emotional and behavioral needs, who is currently very emotionally distraught, throwing materials against the wall and yelling loudly. After jumping in to help the current situation, you follow-up with Carol to ask her about this time. She notes that she often feels overwhelmed during the half hour after children transition into the program from formal school. She notes that Jillian often gets upset during this transition and then one or two staff members are focused on supporting her and she feels like she is left to help the 40 other children on her own (even though she is not physically alone with them). What steps might you take to help Carol?

- *Reassure Carol that you hear her concerns and that you appreciate that she shared them with you. Tell her that together with your trainers or coaches, you will all work on a solution to better support her and the children and youth in the program.*
- *Ask your trainers or coaches to help this school-age program with additional strategies to support all staff, children and youth during after-school arrival:*
 - *Does the current arrival routine and after-school schedule fit the needs of all the children? Is a large-group activity necessary or appropriate?*
 - *Have trainers or coaches observe Jillian during the transition, make sure that communication is happening with Jillian's family to gain their insight on the best ways to support her.*
 - *Could adaptations to the design of the environment (e.g., incorporating a cool down space) help Jillian or other children?*
 - *Are there appropriate and varied materials and experiences to support all children's interests and engagement?*
 - *Are staff members in the school-age program explicit in their communication about who will do what? Are they able to negotiate different roles and responsibilities in the program? Perhaps having staff members take turns being the leader of large-group activities can eliminate some distress*
- *Ensure that staff members are never out of ratio, look at possible staffing arrangements:*
 - *Is it possible to have an additional staff member during this transition time, at least for a short period of time while the staff, trainers and coaches test out strategies? This would also help ensure that staff can carefully watch any modeling trainers or coaches are doing with a particular child or the group as a whole.*
- *Follow up to be sure the changes or modifications chosen are supporting Carol, the other staff, and the youth in your program.*

Trina's Nap Time Conundrum

Trina is a preschool teacher. A few weeks ago, eight new children joined her preschool classroom. She comes to tell you “nap time is a complete disaster.” She says less than half the children actually go to sleep and that the children that are not napping often wake up the others so her room turns into a real zoo. She tells you she hasn’t been taking her regular break because the other teachers in the classroom don’t feel they can handle the classroom with the reduced ratio often followed during nap. She complains that she hasn’t had time to do curriculum planning during nap and has started to do it at home to make sure she has new activity plans posted each week. What steps might you take to help Trina?

- *Reassure Trina that you appreciate that she brought this problem to your attention and that you, and your trainers or coaches will work on a solution to better support her and the children.*
 - *Ask your trainers or coaches to help this preschool classroom with additional strategies to support all the staff and children during nap time:*
 - *How does the design of the environment support children’s restful nap time?*
 - *How does the start of the nap time routine support a restful nap experience? Are there dim lights, soft music, quiet transitions after lunch?*
 - *Have trainers or coaches observe during nap time to identify other potential issues. Have them model developmentally appropriate strategies for supporting a restful nap period*
 - *Are there appropriate materials and spaces for children who do not nap? How can they still be restful during this period? What are families’ comments or concerns regarding their children’s nap times?*
 - *Are staff members in this preschool classroom communicating about who will do what? Are they able to negotiate different roles and responsibilities in the time leading up to and including nap?*
 - *Ensure that staff members are never out of ratio, look at possible staffing arrangements:*
 - *Is it possible to have an additional staff member during nap, at least for a short period of time while the staff, trainers and coaches test out strategies? This would also help ensure that staff can carefully watch any modeling trainers or coaches are doing with a particular child or the group as a whole.*
 - *Assure that staff members are not doing extra unpaid work:*
 - *How can you help support Trina or the other classroom teachers so that they have time to do curriculum planning? Work with your trainers and coaches to see if staff can be given planning time each week, or, at the very least, work with them to assure staff have good strategies for accomplishing these tasks during nap or other appropriately designated times.*
- Follow up to make sure the changes or modifications chosen are supporting Trina, the other staff, and the preschool children in this classroom.*