**Hands on Activity: “*Routines that Rock!”* Song**

*Virtually Engaging Families with Young Children (3-8 years of age)*

**Estimated Time:** 20-25 minutes total

**GOAL**

**This activity encourages families to write songs to help young children develop the routines that will help them participate successfully in distance learning during the pandemic.**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR VIRTUAL PARENT / TEACHER MEETING**

Hold on Zoom, FaceTime or another equivalent platform. Make sure parents and caregivers know how to log in prior to the session. Ask families to RSVP so that you can track likely participants and reach out to families that have not opted-in. This will help make sure that families have what they need to participate should they want to. You can also use the RSVP list to send a reminder about the activity.

**MATERIALS**

Pencils, paper, colorful markers – and your voice! Everything goes better with a song! Check to make sure families have these materials at home. If they don’t, consider mailing activity packets or provide options for picking up materials.

**VIRTUAL ACTIVITY OUTLINE**

1. **Introduce schedule and morning routines for children** (5 min)
   * 1. Share a schedule of learning activities for preschool or kindergarten whether the activities are in-person, virtual or a blend. If virtual, confirm information about how they log in.
     2. Briefly talk about the importance of morning routines for getting ready for school whether learning activities are online or carried out at home. Share how regular routines in the morning and at bedtime help children to attend school or participate in distance learning activities on time every day.
     3. Allow for questions or comments from parents and caregivers.

# Parents and caregivers brainstorm getting ready to learn routines (4 min)

# Share a short, partial list of 3-4 morning rituals and routines that help students get ready for learning, (such as, go potty, wash hands, brush teeth, get dressed, eat breakfast, etc.).

# Set aside needed materials (paper and crayons, books or activity sheets, toys, etc.).

# Turn on technology (if needed and available).

# Ask parents to share additional ideas not on the list. If children are in the room, invite parents to ask their children to share their ideas as well. If the group is large, use the chat box to add ideas.

# Name popular tunes (1 min)

# Families and teachers name tunes that children know and like, and that are easy to connect with simple words. A few examples include:

* + Jingle Bells
  + Row-Row-Row Your Boat
  + The Wheels on the Bus

Remember, words to a song help children develop and use vocabulary.

# Write songs (5 - 10 min)

# Use virtual break-out rooms where families can work in small groups and then sing to each other. If you only have a small number of families or don’t have break out rooms, encourage parents to work on songs with their family members at home. If parents are reluctant, teachers can share an example and invite a parent to take the next turn.

# Closing (5 min)

# Invite 1 or 2 break out groups or families to share their songs. Thank all of the families for participating. End by encouraging families to sing the song(s) they’ve created with their child (take just 1 min every day), and to write new songs with their children! The songs become a happy way to engage children in attendance, language development and having fun!

**OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:**

1. **Song Book** Ask families to email the lyrics that they created that can be included in a songbook which can then be shared with all of the members of your preschool community. You can include this request in your closing during the event or through a follow up email.
2. **Song Fest** (15-20 min) Set a time at a virtual meeting to be held 1-2 weeks later for families to share the songs they have created. After they’ve sung the songs, spend a few minutes inviting families, especially children, to share what they enjoyed about this activity.

If possible, record the singing so it can be shared with others later.

(Revised 10/21/2020)

**Sample Song (Handout)**

**A Perfectly Punctual Song Created by Parents for their Children**

Set to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”



**Sample Perfectly Punctual Song #1**

*Wake up – brush your teeth!*

*And put on your clothes!*

*We are on time for success and this is how it goes!*

*We finished breakfast by 8!*

*We’re at our table on time!*

*Good morning and hello friends, I’m ready to learn today!!*

**Sing a Song of On-Time (Handout)**

**Participants**

**Set to the Tune of**

**Lyrics**