

# Schedules and Routines



**W**ith their need for structure and stability, second graders do best when their teachers stick to a predictable schedule and lay out exactly what the children need to do to succeed at every routine activity across that schedule. These students love the consistency of a daily

schedule, sometimes to the point of becoming rattled by any change to it. Once after one of my classes visited a colleague's second grade room, one student became visibly upset and pulled me aside to let me know he thought I should talk to this teacher. He had noticed that her schedule was "out of order"—among other things, she did math after morning meeting and had read-aloud at the end of the day. "Doesn't she know that read-aloud comes after quiet time and then you do math?" I explained that even though that's when we do read-aloud and math, other classes might have different schedules, and that's OK.

In this chapter, we'll look at practical ways to manage schedules and routines so that second graders will feel comfortable and capable. Attending to this important aspect of teaching will lead to a much smoother year for the children—and for you.

## Scheduling

The first step in creating a daily schedule for second graders is to consider how they learn best. The second step is to list the components of the day, and the third is to sketch out time slots for each component.

### *Consider How Second Graders Learn Best*

Second graders are very curious and love the opportunity to explore topics of interest to them, but they also crave the security of having routine, structure, and plenty of time to do their best work.



Some specifics to keep in mind:

■ **Active learning.** Second graders need to be active throughout the day. They need to get up and move often. They need to get their hands on real objects—working with manipulatives in math, for instance. They need many chances and ways to process new information. For example, if you teach a mini-lesson on a historical period, also plan for students to read about and see visuals of the period, draw or write about what they've learned, or discuss the lesson with a classmate.

■ **Interactive learning.** We all learn best when we have time to process information by communicating with others. Because second graders frequently have trouble imagining different perspectives and can get stuck in their own thinking, opportunities to talk with others about their learning are particularly helpful for them.

■ **Changes of pace and place.** Second graders do best when the pace of their day is varied and they're not physically stuck in one place all day. If you have a fairly long and quiet writing period planned, move students back to the circle for a closing reflection. Then do a quick game or interactive mini-lesson before moving everyone back to their tables to begin your next teaching block.

■ **Energy levels.** As a general rule, second graders have more energy in the mornings than the afternoons. So schedule work that's mentally more challenging for them—such as reading and writing—earlier in the day.

#### What about Pacing Guides?

Many schools require teachers to follow pacing or time guides. Of course, you'll need to adhere to these as closely as you can, but try not to lose sight of the children's needs in the process. If your district requires ninety minutes of language arts instruction, for example, working some quick movement, talking, hands-on work, or reflection breaks into that ninety minutes will refresh the children and help ease any tension they may be feeling. For lively movement breaks that take just one to three minutes, see *Energizers! 88 Quick Movement Breaks That Refresh and Refocus* by Susan Lattanzi Roser (Northeast Foundation for Children, 2009). Other resources are listed in Chapter 4, "Classroom Games, Special Projects, and Field Trips."

Even with their energy in the morning, they'll still need you to break up their intense reading and writing work with movement breaks, read-alouds, shared reading, time to turn and talk, or hands-on language arts work such as art, drama, or games focused on the language arts curriculum. Keep things active in the afternoons as well. Math, science, social studies, and word work can all be structured in ways that get students up and moving around.



- **Need for food.** To stay alert all morning—especially when they're scheduled for late lunch—second graders typically need additional sustenance, so it's important to schedule time for them to have a morning snack.

### List the Day's Components

List both the academic and social components of an average day. Here's a list I've found to be a good starting place:

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Morning meeting         | Word study/spelling |
| Shared reading          | Math                |
| Reading workshop        | Science             |
| Chapter book read-aloud | Social studies      |
| Writing workshop        | Closing routines    |

### Order the Day

Second graders love the consistency a predictable schedule brings, so you'll want to plan the day carefully. Even though some components of the day (such as lunch and specials) may fall into fixed slots that you can't change, it's still worthwhile to sketch out an ideal schedule based on second graders' needs and then adjust it as necessary. Doing so will help keep your scheduling child-centered. Here are a couple of ideal schedules you can work from.

## Two Ideal Schedules

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7:45–8:00	Arrival routine
8:00–8:30	Morning meeting
8:30–8:50	Word work
8:50–9:10	Shared reading and reading mini-lesson
9:10–10:00	Reading workshop, including picture book read-aloud
10:00–10:15	Snack (can be combined with quiet reading, listening to jokes/poems, catch-up time)
10:15–11:00	Writing workshop
11:00–11:30	Special
11:30–12:00	Recess . . . free play
12:00–12:30	Lunch
12:30–12:50	Quiet time
12:50–1:50	Math
1:50–2:05	Read-aloud
2:05–2:45	Science/social studies
2:45–2:50	Clean up and pack
2:50–3:00	Closing circle (see “Dismissal Routines” on page 49)
3:00	Dismissal

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9:50–10:40	Reading workshop, including picture book read-aloud
10:40–11:40	Math
11:40–12:10	Recess . . . free play
12:10–12:40	Lunch
12:40–1:00	Quiet time
1:00–1:40	Science/social studies
1:40–2:00	Read-aloud
2:00–2:30	Special
2:30–2:50	Word work
2:50–2:55	Clean up and pack
2:55–3:00	Closing circle (see “Dismissal Routines” on page 49)
3:00	Dismissal

### Give Movement Breaks Often!

Regardless of what schedule you come up with, insert movement breaks throughout the day as the children need them.

## Teaching Classroom Routines

When I started teaching, I was surprised that students didn't come to school knowing how to do tasks I thought were routine, such as sharpening pencils, asking for my attention, or taking out and putting away drawing materials. On reflection, though, I realized that younger children may never have done some of these tasks. Even if they had, I probably expected the tasks to be done differently. I realized that I would have to help each class feel safe, secure, and happy by teaching them how I wanted classroom routines to look and sound.

### *Use Interactive Modeling to Teach Routines*

One effective way to teach classroom routines is through interactive modeling. This teaching practice breaks routines down into small parts and gives students multiple opportunities to observe, discuss, and try each behavior or skill. Once you get the structure down, you'll find that interactive modeling goes pretty quickly. Plus, the time and effort you put into modeling routines early in the year will pay off in reduced misbehavior, smoother transitions, and more time for learning all year long.

Here's how the basic steps might sound and look if you were teaching students how to sit in a circle and focus on the teacher.



## Interactive Modeling—Sitting Safely and Focusing on the Teacher

Steps to Follow	Might Sound and Look Like
1 Describe a positive behavior you will model.	"When you sit on the rug, it's important that you be safe and that you focus. Watch while I show you how to sit safely and focus on the teacher."
2 Model the behavior.	Designate a student as the pretend teacher. Sit safely and direct your focus to the student. Remain quiet. You do not need to narrate as you model.
3 Ask students what they noticed.	"What did you notice about how I sat and focused?" (If necessary, follow up with questions such as "What did you notice my hands doing?" or "What were my eyes doing?" to prompt children to list the important elements: kept hands and feet to yourself, looked at teacher, remained quiet, etc.)
4 Ask student volunteers to model the same behavior.	"Who can show us how to sit on the rug and focus the same way I did?"
5 Ask students what they noticed.	"How did Noah show he was focusing on me when I was speaking?" The children name Noah's specific safe and focused behaviors.
6 Have the class practice.	"Now we're all going to practice sitting safely and focusing. I'll be watching and seeing you do all the things we just practiced."
7 Provide feedback.	"You did it! You all sat with your legs, arms, and hands in your own space. Your eyes were on me when I talked, and you were leaning forward a little, just to show that extra bit of attention."

## Keys to Successful Interactive Modeling

### BE CLEAR ABOUT HOW YOU WANT THINGS DONE

Rather than just saying “sit safely and respectfully in the circle,” show students exactly what the acceptable ways to sit are (I recommend cross-legged or on their knees). Rather than simply telling children they can talk in the hall with quiet voices, show them what a quiet voice sounds like. Detail-oriented second graders will pay attention to how you model a routine the first time, so think through each step before modeling.

### More Benefits of Interactive Modeling

#### Students . . .

- Become better observers (a skill that transfers into their academic work)
- Begin to value each other as models
- Become more engaged in monitoring their own behavior

### USE A SCRIPT

Having a basic script handy will help you to be exact in your modeling—and to refrain from talking too much! Using fewer words helps your students concentrate on essentials and also allows more time for them to practice and observe.

### KEEP EXPECTATIONS HIGH

Once you’ve modeled and practiced a routine, make sure students meet the expectations you’ve established. That will keep the classroom orderly and the children secure. If you say that when you raise your hand, students should finish their sentence and look at you, don’t start giving directions while most but not all students are ready. Doing so signals that you don’t really mean what you say, which can make second graders feel very uncomfortable and unsafe.





### Making Adjustments for Particular Students

Although it's good to have high expectations for all children, invariably you'll encounter students for whom those expectations are unrealistic. Perhaps you generally expect students to sit empty-handed while in the circle, but you may have a student who needs to hold a certain object to stay calm and focused. Be prepared to adjust your expectations as necessary. Also be sure to discuss with your class why you might occasionally modify rules for particular students. Explain that each of us needs different things to do our best: For example, some of us need glasses; others don't. Similarly, some of us need to hold something in our hands to stay focused; most of us don't. It's the teacher's job to help figure out what each student needs.

### KEEP EXPECTATIONS APPROPRIATE

Sometimes, as we work to keep expectations high, we may ask too much of our students. Perfectionistic second graders may react with anxiety to expectations that are beyond them developmentally or simply unrealistic. For instance, a teacher might tell students they may go to the bathroom anytime except when they might miss important instruction or information. But most second graders can't distinguish what is essential from what is not. Even if they could make this distinction ordinarily, they certainly won't be able to when they need to go to the bathroom, an anxiety-provoking time for children at this age. If your students react with anxiety and confusion to a task you ask them to do, think about whether what you've asked is appropriate for them and if so, why they're confused. If necessary, break the task down into smaller steps, teach those steps, and always be ready to offer guidance and support. See, for example, "Bathroom Routines" on page 42.

### GIVE STUDENTS PLENTY OF PRACTICE

We often expect students to "get it right" the first time they try a new behavior. But just as with academic subjects such as reading or math, children need time to practice behavioral skills. Give them several opportunities to practice and "mess up" with a new behavior, and keep these practice sessions fun and





light. For instance, when practicing how to participate in a group discussion, make a hash mark on chart paper each time children remember to raise their hands before speaking. If someone messes up during practice, simply treat this as a mistake, not a tragedy, just as you would if a student misread a word in a new text or made an addition error. Simply say, "Oops, you forgot to raise your hand. Try again."

### REINFORCE SUCCESS OFTEN

Second graders thrive on positive feedback and need you to pay attention to things they're doing well: "I noticed that you all kept your hands to yourselves and had quiet voices on the way to the library." "I see that you all remembered how to carry your chairs safely to morning meeting." Pay particular attention to struggling students and find a private moment with those children to reinforce their successes even more often. Hearing about what they're doing well shows these students that even though following the rules is hard for them, you see and appreciate that they're trying.

## Key Routines to Teach

At the beginning of the year, teach those routines that will most concern your students and those that will get your classroom up and running quickly and efficiently. Here are the most important routines to focus on.

### RESPONDING TO SIGNALS FOR ATTENTION

When I was student teaching, one professor said he could tell if a teacher had good management skills by watching whether she could get her students' attention whenever she needed it. This lesson stuck with me, and once I had my own classroom, the first thing I always modeled was how students should respond to my signals for attention.

### When to Reteach Routines

Here are a few times when students will benefit from extra attention to routines:

- Monday morning
- Friday afternoon
- Right after vacation
- Before and after you've had a substitute teacher
- Around the holidays
- When a new student joins the class
- Before assemblies and field trips



### Pitfalls When Using Signals

- **Speaking before everyone is quiet.** Sends the message that not everyone has to respond to the signal.
- **Inconsistency in using established signals.** Confuses students: Do you really mean what you say and say what you mean?
- **Using more than one signal.** Teaches students that they don't have to comply right away—they can wait for the second (or third) signal.
- **Demanding immediate silence.** Can feel disrespectful—and may be unrealistic: Students have a natural need to get to a stopping point in their conversation or work (10 to 15 seconds should do it).

Using a signal is more respectful than calling out “Hey, kids” or “Listen up” or beginning to give directions before children are ready. Signals are also more effective than too much teacher talk (“Okay, everyone, it’s time to come to the circle for reading. Owen, I need you to listen when I’m giving directions. Vivi and Matthew, stop doing that and clean up. Everyone needs to be heading this way to the circle. I’m about to read a book to you. Don’t you want to hear it?”). After the first few words, students will tend to tune out your voice. Using a signal also has a calming effect so that students

become quiet and more ready to listen. Further, when taught and used correctly, the signal gives students the message that we expect all of them, not just some, to listen and learn.

Whatever signals you use, it’s respectful and realistic to give children a few seconds to finish what they’re saying or doing before expecting them to be quiet and attentive. Second graders especially become very involved in whatever they’re doing and find it hard to stop immediately.

In general, I use two kinds of signals: visual and auditory.

- **Visual signal.** Simply raising your hand is a good way to signal for the attention of children working with you in a circle or at a table. When children see your hand raised, they quickly finish what they’re saying or doing, raise one hand to help spread the signal, put their other hand in their lap, and look at you.
- **Auditory signal.** When students are spread out around the room working, an auditory signal such as a wind chime, rain stick, or other pleasant-sounding instrument works well. When they hear the sound, children moving about the room freeze and look at you. Children working at their desks quickly finish the word they’re writing or the sentence they’re saying and look at you.

## Having a Substitute Teacher? Keep the Schedule and Key Routines in Place!

**Schedules.** It may be tempting to plan something different to make the day with the substitute, or “guest teacher,” feel more special. But in this situation, different feels worse to routine-oriented second graders.

**Routines.** Be specific in your lessons plans about any special routines or traditions the class has. For instance, if you typically begin math with a warm-up activity, choose an easy one for the guest teacher, but do not have her skip it.

### Other ways to help the day go smoothly.

- Choose several students the guest teacher can ask about the schedule and routines (rotate among students over the course of the year).
- Discuss with the class ways they can care for each other and the guest teacher while you’re out (do what the guest teacher says even if it’s different from what you would do, remember that you’ll be back tomorrow, etc.) Leave these ideas for the guest teacher to review with the class.
- Interactively model and practice being with a guest teacher. For example, have a colleague, pretending to be the guest teacher, act out doing spelling activities in the wrong order. Model and then let students practice how to do the activities in that order or how to respectfully let her know the correct order.

## STUDENT SIGNALS

Of course, students will also need to gain your attention, so teach them how to do so appropriately. Two signals will be helpful when you are working with the whole group.

- **Raising a hand.** If a student wants to tell you something in the ordinary course of a discussion, raising a hand works. But be sure to model and practice waiting until a classmate has finished speaking before raising a hand. When students have their hands raised, they’re often thinking ahead to what they’re going to say rather than listening, so we need to teach them strategies to help them listen fully to others.



- **SOS for emergencies.** For emergencies (bloody nose, feeling sick, and so forth), have a separate signal like SOS (hand shut, hand open, hand shut). Because second graders have frequent aches and pains, be sure to cover in detail what constitutes an emergency and privately help students who struggle with these distinctions as the year goes on.

### BATHROOM ROUTINES

Second graders worry considerably about having bathroom accidents, so you'll need to teach bathroom routines as soon as possible—preferably on the first day of school. Your routine may well depend upon where the bathrooms are located, but if possible, second graders need to be able to go to the bathroom “as needed,” rather than having to wait for appointed times.

I usually allow one student at a time (of each gender) to go to the bathroom.

They simply go to a pocket chart that contains cards with their names, remove their card, and put it in the bathroom slot. When they return, they put their card back in the pocket chart.

Other things to model and practice are how much toilet paper to use, how to wash hands thoroughly, and how to wipe around the sinks.

#### Who Goes First?

No matter what grade you teach, students will worry about who gets to be first in line. Second graders, who see this issue in terms of fairness, are no different, and if the same people are first each day, others will notice and object.

I often hear teachers tell students, “Don’t worry about who’s first—we’re all going to the same place, so it doesn’t matter who gets there first.” This reasoning wouldn’t work for me as I wait in line to board an airplane, buy things at the store, or get my driver’s license. It won’t convince many children, either. So think through how to handle who’ll go first: Will you call students to line up by table groups or categories (“If you have blue on, line up”), or use some numeric system? It doesn’t really matter what method you use, as long as you don’t leave it to the children to decide who goes first.

### MORNING ROUTINES

The morning arrival period is a great time to ask about personal events or siblings, make connections, and check in with students. Students also need the sense of structure that comes from completing morning tasks. Suggestions for a productive morning routine:



- **Manageable tasks.** Give children some basic tasks to accomplish, but avoid loading them up with too much “morning work.”
- **Pleasant environment.** Have music or an audiobook playing as the children arrive (poetry works well—anyone can enjoy it whenever they walk in).
- **Individual activities.** If children arrive over a period of time rather than all at once, consider letting early arrivers do some quiet activities—for instance, working puzzles, playing with blocks or Legos, journaling, reading, or doing math puzzles.

#### SITTING IN THE CIRCLE FOR WHOLE-GROUP LESSONS

Many of us adults are still learning how to show that we’re focused and listening, so it’s unrealistic to assume that children will have mastered this skill by second grade. What components of respectful listening are important to you? I generally allow students to sit cross-legged or on their knees. I expect students to focus their eyes on whoever is speaking and to keep their hands and feet close to their bodies. I also let them stand up to take a stretch break when they need to (and of course to leave for bathroom and other emergencies).



## TRANSITIONS

Fast and efficient transitions are key to the smooth running of any classroom, and these are especially important for second graders, who may feel unsafe when they have too much unstructured, unguided time. You'll need to teach students ways to quickly transition from one activity to another in your classroom and from your classroom to other locations in the school. To avoid losing important time for instruction, lunch, or play, think through how students can make efficient transitions, teach them how to do that, and practice those skills until they are proficient with them.

Transitions into and outside of the classroom:

- **Leave enough time to shift gears calmly.** Students will handle hallways and whatever their next activity is more successfully if they have a chance to become calm, come together as a community, and think ahead to what's next. Rather than rushing your students out the door, leave enough time to call them to line up calmly, ask them to close their eyes and take a deep breath, or play a quick but quiet game like a silent follow-the-teacher. You might also consider playing some quiet, soft music as students leave the room.
- **Model lining up and walking in hallways.** The more time you devote to modeling and having students practice routines for getting from one





### How to Teach Line and Hallway Routines

- **Decide where the line should be.** Where should children line up in the classroom before they leave? Choose a spot with few distractions where all the students can comfortably stand in a line.
- **Teach exactly how to line up.** Model and have students practice walking quickly to the line without stopping to touch or look at anything on the way, facing front, keeping arms at their sides, and leaving space between people (I show students a distance of elbow to fingertips when I model lining up, and they come up with their own way of describing this distance).
- **Teach expected hallway behavior.** If you have a choice, allow children to talk quietly as they walk, as this is more appropriate for second graders. But be sure to model and have students practice exactly what volume is OK. Otherwise, you may end up spending too much time turning down the volume. I also model and have students practice walking at a steady pace and staying together (by maintaining that elbow-to-fingertip distance).
- **Walk with your class.** Second graders are not ready for the responsibility of walking as a class without their teacher. They will feel unsafe doing so.

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place to another safely and efficiently, the safer and more secure they'll feel, and the fewer "line incidents" you'll have. See the box above for a good way to approach this teaching.

- **Spell out what to do upon arriving back in the classroom.** Think through exactly where you want students to be and what you want them to do before they enter the classroom, and spell these expectations out to them. ("When we get to the classroom, go to your spot in the circle, sit quietly, and wait for our read-aloud. It's a good one today!") Stop the line right at your classroom door and remind everyone of the expectations (or have a student or two do the reminding).

Transitions within the classroom:

- **Model how to move from the circle to desks.** You can save a great deal of instructional time by making transitions from the circle to desks smooth and seamless. Model and practice how it looks and sounds for

children to leave the circle, get necessary materials, go back to their desks, and quickly get to work on a project or assignment. Depending upon what they need to do to get ready for an assignment, most second graders should be able to get back to their seats and be ready to work in only a few minutes.

- **Model how to move from desks to the circle.** Just as explicitly, you'll need to model how it looks and sounds to stop working, clean up, and come back to the circle. Be sure to teach students where to put materials, what they should do with both finished and unfinished work, and how long cleaning up should take. It often helps to have a specific song that you play as students clean up—when the song ends, they should be in place in the circle.

#### INDEPENDENT WORK-TIME ROUTINES

Establishing productive and efficient independent work times will take several weeks for second graders. As you think through what you want work times to look and sound like, consider the children's developmental needs as well as your own tolerance for noise and movement. Some key considerations:

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- **Work place.** If at all possible, let second graders work on the floor, in any private little corners or areas you can set up, and even under tables or desks. They enjoy these confined spaces.
- **Changing places.** Second graders can sustain their attention to work for increasingly longer periods (but usually no more than thirty minutes) once there's a sense of calm in the room, with few students up and moving. It's best, therefore, to teach children to stay in the place they've chosen once they begin working.
- **Work posture.** Most second graders prefer to sit and work, but some may work better standing. Let them do so, as long as they can be productive.



■ **Getting your attention.**

Many second graders benefit from frequent check-ins with their teacher. Try teaching students to seek help from friends if they are “stuck” and to work on an alternate assignment if their friends can’t help. Then, leave whatever group or individual with whom you’re working every fifteen

minutes or so for a brief check-in around the room with students working independently. For emergencies, teach students to come to you, tap your shoulder, and show you the “SOS” sign.



**READ-ALoud ROUTINES**

Second graders often respond to read-alouds with uninhibited emotions. My class begged, “Can you read just one more chapter, please?” every day when I was reading Lois Lowry’s *Gooney Bird Greene*. “Read it again!” someone might cry when I read the deceptively simple picture book *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems. Sometimes their mesmerized silence would say it all, as when we read *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordicai Gerstein.

Second graders enjoy funny and serious selections, true-to-life stories, mysteries and fantasies, and any book with strong and interesting characters. In many ways, it’s a smorgasbord year, with the children needing (and loving) to try out many different types of books as they begin to develop their reading tastes.

Focus on the specific needs of second graders to make the most of read-aloud time:

- **Try to read aloud several times each day.** Vary your selections among picture books, chapter books, and portions of nonfiction books (perhaps related to your science or social studies theme or to a math topic). You might create a selection of joke and poetry books from which to read



aloud when you have an extra moment in the circle or while lining up. Some of these read-alouds can be as short as a few minutes.

- **Schedule effectively.** Remember second graders' need to balance more active times with more quiet times. Let this be your guide in scheduling read-alouds. For example, read-alouds work especially well after an active time like P.E. or recess.
- **Scaffold for success.** Second graders can develop quite lengthy attention spans, but they need to do so gradually. At the beginning of the year, choose shorter, simpler selections—for example, picture books that you can read in five to ten minutes and chapter books with similarly short chapters. As the year progresses, gradually add longer and more complex texts.
- **Keep the room focused and quiet.** In general, second graders do not need to draw, get up and move around, eat snacks, or do anything else besides listen during read-alouds. In fact, most of them need a calm and quiet classroom to fully enjoy the read-aloud experience. You will, of course, want to accommodate any students who struggle with attention. Depending on the child, you might let him or her draw, squeeze a squeeze toy, or, upon a signal from you, get up and move about for a few minutes.

## EMERGENCY ROUTINES

Occasionally, second graders have bathroom accidents, vomit, throw temper tantrums, have bloody noses, or become caught up in some other crisis that requires your full attention. At these times, it's crucial for the rest of the class to know what you expect them to do while you're helping the child who's having trouble. I teach students that when I say, "This is an emergency time," they should take these steps:

- **Students keep working.** If they're working independently, just keep working.
- **Students read at their seats.** If they're meeting in the circle, return to their desks, pull out a book, and start reading.

### Remember to Teach Recess and Lunch Routines!

See Chapter 3, "Building Community," to learn more about those middle-of-the-day routines.

Practice this routine until the class has it down pat. It'll help you deal with those occasional emergencies more efficiently, and it'll help all the children feel safe.

## DISMISSAL ROUTINES

Second graders are typically pretty spent by dismissal time and can't keep in mind a long list of end-of-the-day tasks. If you expect them to straighten their desks, put homework in their folders, get their backpacks and coats,



put their folders and other materials in their backpacks, and remember how to get to buses, cars, or parents quickly and safely, you'll be setting them up for frustration. As with all "to do" lists for second graders, keep the dismissal list as short as possible. See if some tasks can be done more successfully earlier in the day, such as putting homework in folders and straightening their desks.

Before dismissal, try to carve out time for a brief but meaningful close to the day in the form of a closing circle. During this time, you might want to engage children in some quick reflection about the day ("What are some things that went well for you?" or "What are some ways we took care of each other today?") You may also want to choose one or two aspects about the upcoming day to highlight. Finally, you may want to end with a familiar song, chant, or cheer. Sending second graders home on a positive note makes them feel more confident and secure and leaves them looking forward to their return to school.

#### OTHER ROUTINES

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Some other routines and social skills you may want to model and practice:

- Indoor recess routines
- Taking care of and putting away class supplies
- Winning and losing a game graciously
- Fire, earthquake, or tornado drill routines
- Greeting former teachers, friends, and family when children see them around the school
- Completing class jobs
- Turning in homework
- Closing circle

#### Learn More about Schedules and Routines

*The First Six Weeks of School* by Paula Denton and Roxann Kriete (Northeast Foundation for Children, 2000).





## Closing Thoughts

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By creating and sticking to a predictable schedule that fits second graders' needs, you can give them a good measure of the safety and security they crave. Taking time to think through and explicitly teach classroom routines and behaviors further adds to children's sense of comfort and stability. The time you invest in this work will make for a more comfortable and productive year for everyone.