

Enhancing the Daily Living Skills of Learners with Special Needs using the Home Routine Cards

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the enhancement of the daily living skills of learners with special needs with the use of Home Routine Cards in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic in which Modular Distance Learning was used as the mode of delivery of instruction to learners. For learners to become independent in the future, daily life skills are crucial. Because of this, the Home Routine Card was created. The Home Routine Card is influenced by the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and is particularly beneficial for individuals with special needs, especially those with Autism, who have limited or no means of communication. The PECS approach is an affordable and low-tech language intervention recommended by the National Autism Resources. It has been found to reduce tantrums and unusual behaviors. Moreover, this will help improve the current situation at the home of learners with special needs with the use of Home Routine Cards. The result of the study showed that the comparison between the pre-implementation and post-implementation of the usage of the Home Routine Cards to learners with special needs, it enhanced their daily living skills because it helped as a guide to what are the activities that they would likely to do in their day-to-day activity at home during this time of COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, these Home Routine Cards are beneficial to both general and special education classes as well as to their families and it has a positive effect on the learners which they can use until they grow up.

Keywords: learners with special needs, home routine cards, daily living skills, modular distance learning, special education

Introduction of Best Practices

For a youngster to become independent in the future, daily life skills are crucial. Because of this, improving the daily life skills of students with disabilities is crucial for both them and their families. Additionally, employing visual aids will make it simpler for them to remember what needs to be done each day. To assist students with special needs in their daily home activities, the Home Routine Card was created.

The Home Routine Cards consist of a collection of pictures depicting various daily activities that learners can engage in at home during modular distance learning. The cards are designed to be unbiased towards gender and come in two sets: one for male learners and one for female learners. The pictures are large, and the accompanying words are easy to read. These Home Routine Cards aim to meet the specific requirements of learners with disabilities by fostering their self-reliance in

transitioning between activities throughout the day. By providing clear visual cues, the cards help minimize disruptions and tantrums, enabling smoother transitions from one task to another.

The Home Routine Card is influenced by the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and is particularly beneficial for individuals with special needs, especially those with Autism, who have limited or no means of communication. The PECS approach is an affordable and low-tech language intervention recommended by the National Autism Resources.

This is also anchored to the Special Education Weekly Home Learning Plan, where the activities are captured and served as a basis. It is because learners with special need do also answer modules the same as the learners in the general education class but then before they can answer they still have activities to do before it like waking up, fixing the bed, and so on. For them to do so, they need assistance from adults or their parents/guardians. By then, the importance of the home routine cards comes in and serves as the guide for the learners in their daily activity.

Furthermore, for learners with special needs, like learners with autism, it can help prepare them for the transition by allowing them to see the next activity and understand the sequence of activities. Applying this to both the learners and parents at home and as well as the teacher at school is a great help to them. It will help lessen the disruption in learning, lessen unusual behaviors, and have a smooth sailing transition of activities.

Justification of Best Practices Implementation

Since the Novel Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak all over the world, many people around the globe were greatly affected. Even the public health, business and economy, work, and home environment have been impacted by this outbreak.

In the education sector, many schools have been greatly affected as well. Most countries around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the virus and reduce infections (Tria, 2020). Globally, COVID-19 impacted the mental health of children and young adolescents for years to come. Schools' shutdowns have already been blamed for a rise in dropout rates and decreased literacy, and the World Bank estimates that the number of children aged 10 and below and middle-income countries, who cannot read simple text has risen from 53% prior to the pandemic to 70% today (De Guzman, 2021). In the Philippines, the face-to-face learning of learners and teachers in school has been suspended to protect both the teachers and learners from the virus. Because of this, the Department of Education spearheaded by Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones developed a package of education interventions that will respond to basic education challenges brought about by COVID-19 (DepEd Order no.12, s. 2020) and look for alternative ways to provide quality education to every Filipino learner. The Department of Education offered the following distance learning modalities that schools can adopt: (1) Modular distance learning, (2) Online Distance learning, and (3) TV and Radio-Based Instruction. Based on the partial results of the Learner Enrollment and Survey Forms (LESFs) distributed during the enrollment period, 7.2 million enrollees prefer to use

modular distance learning, TV, and Radio-based instruction (Hernando-Malipot, 2020). At present, modular distance learning is the most popular modality used in public schools. The modular approach situates Filipino students to learn in the comfort of their homes. Limited contact with teachers will place parents or guardians as the learners' model or the "More Knowledgeable Other" (Maglangit, Paglumotan, & Sopera, 2020).

In Special Education, learners with special needs are one of the most affected individuals by the COVID-19 outbreak. Most especially they have different disabilities, and they have different needs which need to be catered to. They learn best through face-to-face learning to develop their skills like social and communication, yet it is suspended due to the unexpected outbreak and because of that, they need to stay at home with their parents/guardians for safety and welfare. In line with this, the special education classes use modular distance learning the same as regular classes. Learners with special needs are provided with a Learning Activity Package (LAP) for them to answer at home. The LAP is made according to their disability. But to help them to answer at home, they need to have their parents/guardians assist or guide them. The support of parents has demonstrated a significant contribution to the success of the learner. But before they can answer the LAP, they still need to do activities to prepare themselves like waking up, fixing the bed, eating breakfast, taking a bath, and dressing up.

These series of daily activities of learners still need the assistance of their parents/guardians for them to remember it and until such time this will become their daily routine. Routines are the backbone of daily classroom life. It facilitates teaching and learning. Routines do not just make their lives easier, but this can also save classroom time. Moreover, efficient routines make it easier for students to learn and achieve more. In modular distance learning, the classroom routine is now shifted to the home routine. This study helped learners with special needs to enhance their daily living skills with the use of Home Routine Cards.

Objectives of Implementation

The objectives of best practice implementation are:

1. To increase the daily living skills of learners with special needs using the Home Routine Cards.
2. To increase the positive behavior of learners with special needs at home using the Home Routine Cards in their day-to-day living.

Best Practices Implemented

Home Routine Cards as an Innovation

The Home Routine Cards is a compilation of different pictures with names of the daily activities to be done by learners at home during modular distance learning. It is a gender-free bias home routine card because it has two sets, one for male learners and one for female learners. It also has large pictures which are searched on the internet and easy-to-read words.

These Home Routine Cards helped learners to know the things they needed to do in a day. For learners with special needs, like learners with autism, learning disability, intellectual disability, physical disability, and communication disorder, it helped prepare them for the transition by allowing them to see the next activity and to understand the sequence of activities.

Also, this is anchored to the Special Education Weekly Home Learning Plan, which is where the activities are captured and as a basis for this innovative material.

The PECS inspires these Home Routine Cards. PECS is good for learners with special needs, especially those learners with Autism, with little or no communication. Also, according to the National Autism Resources, PECS is an inexpensive, low-tech language intervention, and it decreases tantrums and odd behaviors.

Diagram 1
Sample Home Routine Cards



Home Routine Card as an Intervention

The Home Routine Cards will serve as their guide in their everyday living, for them to familiarize and master the activities for the whole day, from waking up until going to sleep, and to help learners with special needs to prepare them for their future until such time these activities will turn into routines. Also, this will lessen disruption. Moreover, this can make communication much easier for both parents/guardians and their children, both verbal and non-verbal.

Diagram 2
Learner seeing each of the Home Routine Cards.



Home Routine Card as a Strategy

The Home Routine Cards is using a picture-to-picture with easy-to-read words. It is arranged according to the first thing that a child will do in the morning like waking up, fixing the bed until preparing before sleep, and going to bed. The pictures used in this Home Routine Cards were gotten from the internet and their URLs were cited as references. Moreover, this will guide parents/guardians and children step-by-step each day. For this to be implemented, the researcher tapped the parents/guardians to use this with their children at home for 1 month. The parents were oriented to use the Home Routine Cards every day for 1 month or from the 1st week up to the 4th week depending on how the child responds to the Home Routine Card. To monitor the progress of the learners, there was a questionnaire answered by the parents by checking the activities done by the learners before and after the implementation of the Home Routine Cards. Also, the researcher monitored the learners' progress by phone calls, text messages/chat, or personal one-on-one interviews aside from the questionnaire.

Diagram 3
Home Routine Cards with URLs

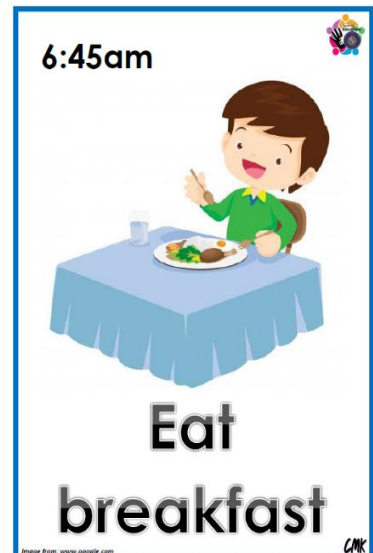
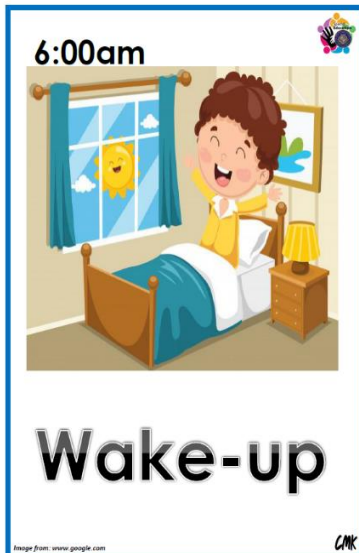




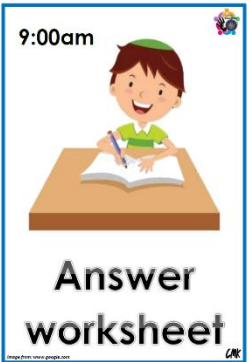


Diagram 4
Orientation on the Home Routine Cards and Questionnaire

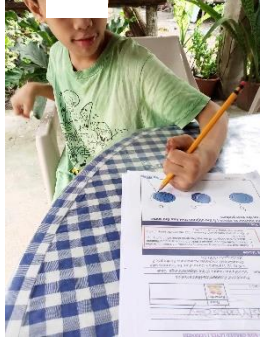


Diagram 5
Parents received their own copy of the Home Routine Cards and Monitoring Tool



Table 1
Implementation of the Home Routine Cards at Home

Home Routine Card	Sample Pictures of the Implementation at Home by the Parent
BOY	
 <p>7:00am</p> <p>Brush teeth</p>	
 <p>9:00am</p> <p>Answer worksheet</p>	
 <p>10:45am</p> <p>Play</p>	

 <p>11:30am</p> <p>Wash hands</p>	
 <p>6:00pm</p> <p>Eat dinner</p>	
GIRL	
 <p>7:00am</p> <p>Brush teeth</p>	
 <p>9:00am</p> <p>Answer worksheet</p>	

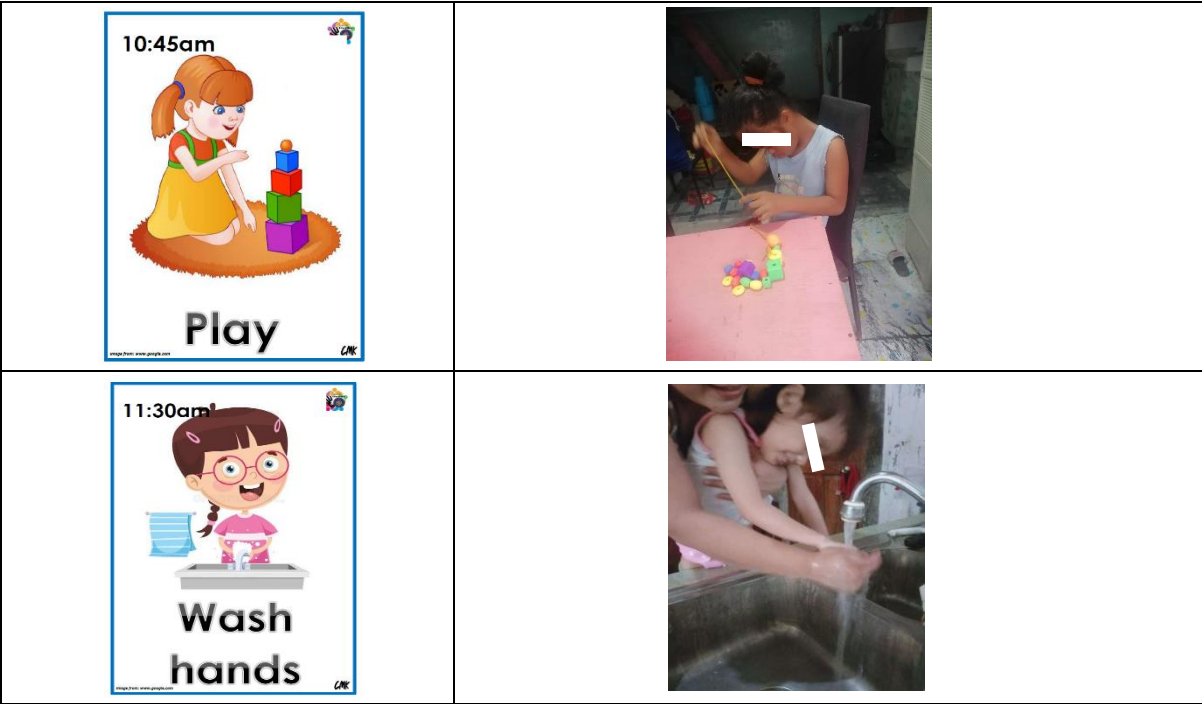


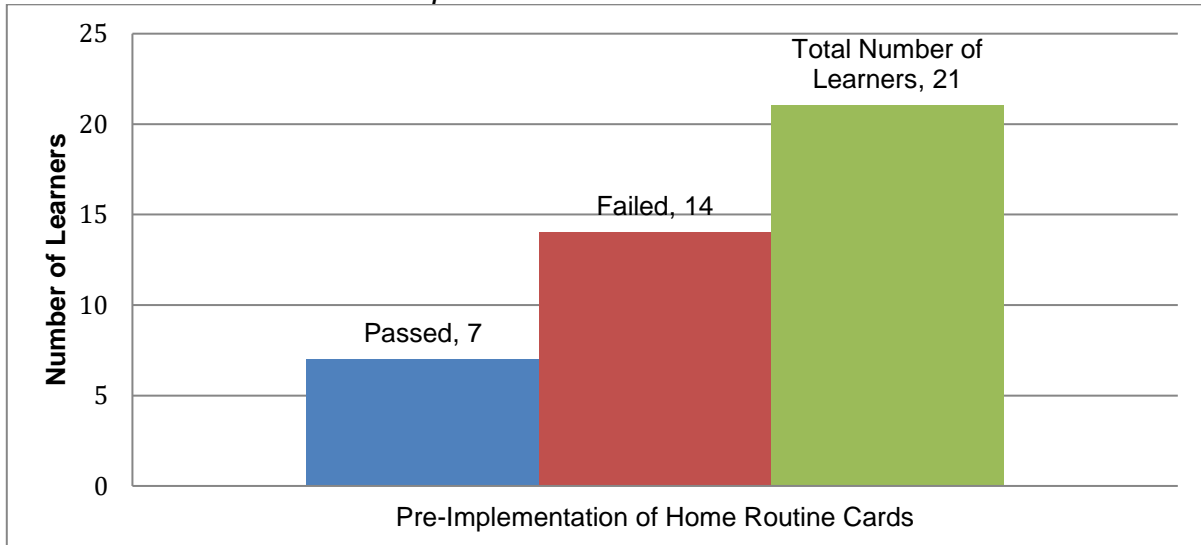
Diagram 6

One-on-one interview with the Parents about the Home Routine Cards during the Retrieval and Distribution of Modules



Impact of Best Practices Implemented

Table 2
Result of Pre-implementation of the Home Routine Cards

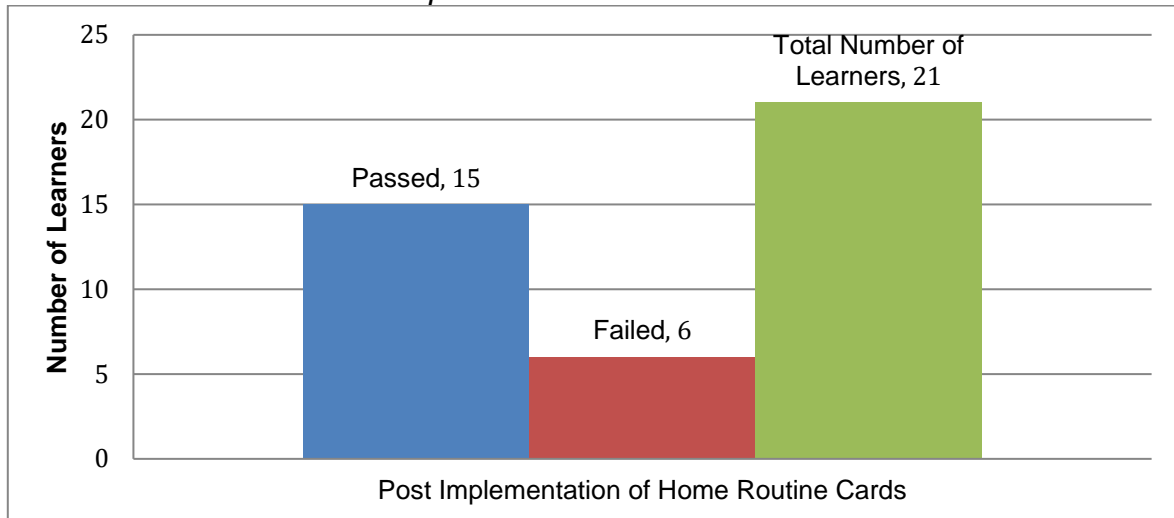


As shown in Figure 1, the result of the conduct of the pre-implementation of Home Routine Cards, 7 out of 21 learners got passing scores while 14 out of 21 the learners failed. This means that the level of daily living skills of learners with special needs is low. This implies that learners with special needs need routines to know what to do next every day and to fully acquire it and put it into action for them to use it in their daily living skills as they grow.

Furthermore, using a nice routine lets you mentally breathing space because you know they are in order. Also, with this routine, you can say that a certain day is on autopilot because you already know the different parts of the day.

However, there were some factors that affect the pre-implementation of the home routine cards: (1) unstructured activities for the day, (2) the parent/guardian is busy; and (3) there activities that were not yet done or cannot be done by the child at home on his own without assistance.

Table 3
Result of Post Implementation of the Home Routine Cards

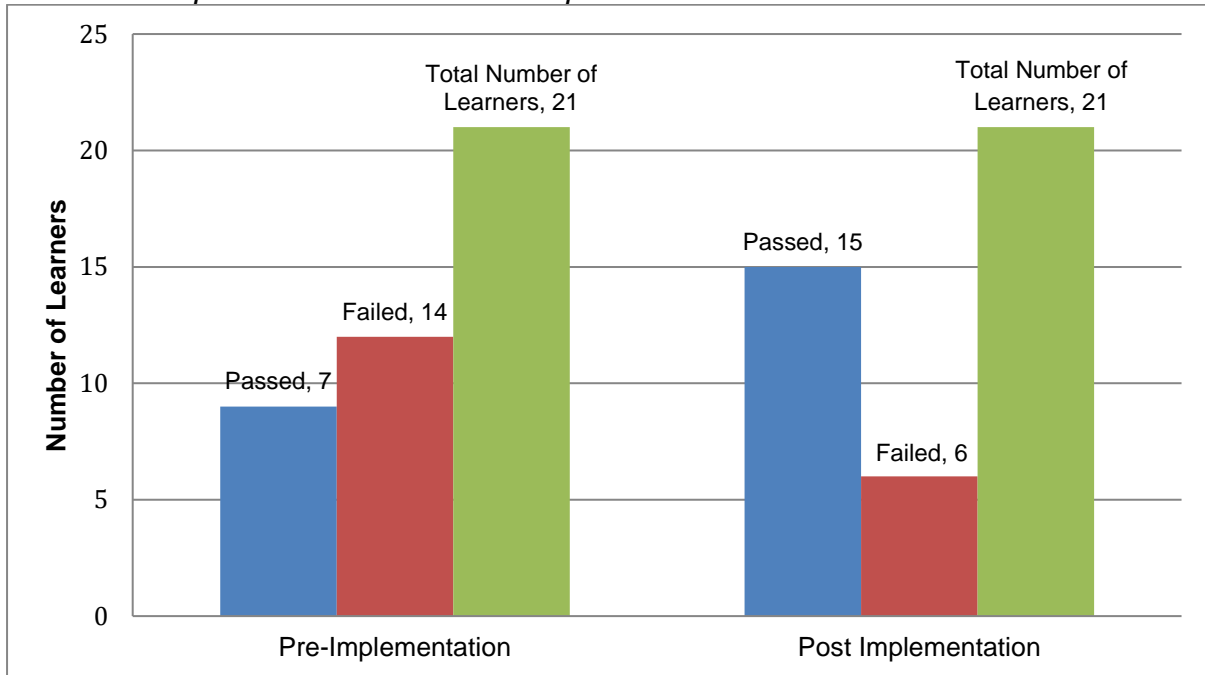


It revealed in Figure 2 that the number of learners who passed had increased after the implementation of the Home Routine Cards. After the implementation, about 15 out of 21 learners passed and only 6 out of 21 learners got the failing scores. This result shows that the Home Routine Cards are very helpful to learners with special needs when it comes to enhance their daily living skills.

This Home Routine Cards shown enhancement in the learners daily living skills because it can easily be learned by them and can relate to their day-to-day activities at home. Also, to the parents, they can easily assist their child in learning it because some of the activities to be done are repeated. Additionally, the result showed a positive parent support in their child's learning.

Research shows that it's a win-win for everyone in the home. Kids be better when they are in a good routine and for them knowing their activities and what's up next helps ease transition. For parents, they would worry less and would supervise less once this routine with different activities is fully established for their children at home.

Table 4
Comparative Results on the Implementation of Home Routine Cards



The result shows in Figure 3, the comparison between the pre-implementation and post-implementation of the usage of the Home Routine Cards for learners with Special Needs with the help of the parents/guardians that there is an increase in learner's level of daily skills after the intervention from 7 learners to 15 learners and a decrease in the number of learners who failed from 14 learners to 6 learners. This indicates that the said Home Routine Cards given to learners with special needs to enhance their daily living skills had a significant effect on them. Furthermore, these Home Routine Cards are beneficial as well to the General Education Classes, most especially to the young learners.

Summary and Recommendations

In the comparison result in the implementation of the Home Routine Cards, it revealed that there is an increase after the implementation of the Home Routine Cards. About 15 out of 21 learners passed and only 6 out of 21 learners got failing scores. This result shows that the Home Routine Cards are very helpful to learners with special needs when it comes to enhancing their daily living skills.

Based on the results, the home routine cards helped the children with special needs in such ways as (1) it served as a guide to them, (2) it helped to do house activities and clean oneself, (3) it helped in giving new activities to learn that the children have not learned yet, (4) the child would ask what is in the routine card, (5) it is easily remembered what is the next thing to do, (6) it has a clear image, (7) knows what is in the picture, (8) it adds on to their knowledge, (9) it helps them understand the things they need to do at home and (10) it makes them responsible as they grow up.

The Home Routine Cards have enhanced the learner's daily living skills. After all, it can easily be learned even if he cannot read yet because it has large, visible, and understandable pictures that the learners can relate to their day-to-day activities at home. Also, the parents can easily assist their child in learning both in reading and identifying each of the home routine cards because some of those are repeated according to time, like hand washing, eating, toothbrushing, and setting and cleaning the table. Moreover, the result also shows a positive parent engagement to their child's learning. Parent engagement is strong which it fully implemented the Home Routine Cards, and it is very applicable at home during this time of COVID-19 Pandemic and even in a home school.

These cards helped them as a guide to what activities the learners like them would likely do in their day-to-day activities at home during this time of pandemic. Experts share that schedules create a sense of safety and confidence because they make a child's environment predictable. When kids know what's coming up on their day, there's order and familiarity. Instead of wondering what's next. A child can focus on learning and mastering new skills (Marcin, 2021). Furthermore, routines help provide a pattern and predictability to one's day (Ostrosky, Jung, Hemmeter, & Thomas, 2007). Structured routines are especially important for some children with special needs or behavioral difficulties (Virtual Lab School, 2021). Setting a daily routine provides children with the security that they need to grow up well-rounded and confident (Natural Beach Living, 2022).

The best routines have a clear beginning and end (Virtual Lab School, 2021), in which adults need to teach children these routines directly. Daily routines help family life run more smoothly. They also help families enjoy more time together. Routines help children feel safe, develop life skills, and build healthy habits. Routines help parents feel organized, reduce stress, and find time for enjoyable activities (Raising Children Network (Australia), 2022). It also creates more quality time together, for both the child and the parent. Moreover, it enhances the bond between the parent and the children than before. In addition, the whole family will benefit psychologically from a structured regime. As such, when both the parents and children are eating their dinner and doing homework with less stress and drama. Regular and consistent routines can help you feel like you are doing a good job as a parent (Raising Children Network (Australia), 2022).

Also, the cards help them not only with their knowing activities to be done every day but also reading, by reading through sight words on the names of each of the activities. They also double as a learning tool for children who are just beginning to read. With simple vocabulary words and bright illustrations, children can start making connections between ideas, sounds, and words. They are accessible to young children who can't yet read (Twinkl, 2020). Lastly, these Home Routine Cards helped in identifying different activities with the use of pictures especially for those learners that have a speech or communication disorder. They can use the images to start forming associations between spoken and written words (Twinkl, 2020). These children often rely on routines for consistency and can benefit from visual support to help them successfully complete routines (Virtual Lab School, 2021).

These Home Routine Cards are very useful to learners with special needs to develop their daily living skills until such time this will become a routine for time. This will serve as a guide both to the learner and the parents/guardians at home. This is also good for learners with special needs, especially for those learners with autism, with little or no communication because of the colored large pictures and simple-to-read words. Furthermore, this will be useful to learners in lower grades such as kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 learners as well. The teacher orients the parents about it to ensure the proper usage of this innovative material before its implementation. This will also develop the bond between the child and their parents/guardians because they will be the ones to facilitate this for their child at home and help learners with special needs manage their activity at home, this said innovative material is personally made by the researcher.

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