5-Minute ABA Micro-Moments

Daily Routine Cheat Sheet | Tiny teaching chances inside routines you already have

You don't need a therapy room or an hour to help a child learn. You need five minutes and a routine you already have. Use this cheat sheet to turn ordinary moments (shoes, snacks, bath time) into short, happy practice sessions.

The ABCs of every micro-moment

A — Antecedent
What happens right BEFORE

Example: "Time to put on shoes."

B — Behavior
What your child DOES

Example: Puts on one shoe.

C — Consequence
What happens right AFTER

Example: "Yes! You did it yourself!" + high-five

Why it works: when a behavior is followed by something your child enjoys, it happens **more often**. That is called **reinforcement**, the engine behind every idea in this guide.

THE 5-MINUTE RULE

ONE routine + ONE skill + ONE reward = 5 minutes

How a micro-moment runs

1. **Pick** — one tiny skill
2. **Say it** — once, clearly
3. **Wait** — 5 seconds
4. **Reward** — right away
5. **Stop** — on a win

Your 13 micro-moments, by routine

- **Morning** — 3 ideas
- **Mealtime** — 3 ideas
- **Transitions** — 3 ideas
- **Play & Bedtime** — 4 ideas

Reward ideas menu (pick what YOUR child loves)

- High-five
- Tickle or hug
- Favorite song
- Bubbles
- Sticker
- Choose the music
- Extra story page
- Dance party

© 2026 AutismRoutineHub

Morning & Mealtime

Micro-moments 1 to 6 | Independence and communication

MORNING: the “I can do it” five minutes

1 Back-chain the shoes

You do most of the job. Your child does only the **last** step (pulling the heel up). Celebrate it! Next week they do the last two steps. Finishing is the most rewarding part, so start there.

2 Two-choice dressing

Hold up two shirts and ask, “Red or blue?” Choice-making builds cooperation and communication, and it removes the “put this on” power struggle.

3 First-Then

Say: “**First** brush teeth, **then** music on.” Short and clear, with the reward already built in.

TRY IT TOMORROW

Pick just **ONE** of the three. Say your words once, wait 5 seconds, then give a specific cheer: “You pulled your heel up all by yourself!”

MEALTIME: the “ask for it” five minutes

4 Create a tiny need

Place the juice slightly out of reach, or serve cereal without the spoon. Pause and wait. Any way your child asks (word, sign, point, picture) gets the item right away. This is **manding**, or requesting, and it is a powerful skill.

5 Expand one step

Child says “juice”? Model one step up: “More juice!” Give the juice immediately, with no quiz and no “say it again.”

6 The “one bite” bridge

For picky eating, put one tiny piece of a new food beside a favorite. Praise any contact: touching, smelling, licking. Small steps count, and pressure is not part of the plan.

TRY IT TOMORROW

Serve the snack in two or three **small portions** instead of all at once. Each portion is a fresh chance to ask.

© 2026 AutismRoutineHub

Transitions, Play & Bedtime

Micro-moments 7 to 13 | Calm changes and happy connections

TRANSITIONS: the “calm change” five minutes

7 The countdown

Give warnings at **5 minutes**, **2 minutes**, and “last one.” A visual timer works even better because your child can **see** time shrinking.

8 Transition object

Let them carry a favorite toy from the playroom to the car. The object bridges the gap between “here” and “there.”

9 Reward the easy transition

When your child stops on the first warning, even slightly, celebrate right away: “You turned off the tablet so fast! Now we can go to the park.” Catch the good transitions, not just the hard ones.

TRY IT TOMORROW

Pick ONE transition (for example, screen time to dinner) and use the **same three-step warning every day this week**. Consistency is what makes it work.

PLAY, BATH & BEDTIME: the “connect and wind down” five minutes

10 Follow their lead, add one step

Join what they are doing, then add one twist. They line up cars; you add a ramp. They stack blocks; you hand over the next one and wait.

11 Bath-time labeling

Say one word and pause: *pour, splash, bubbles, wet, full*. Then let them fill the gap: “Ready, set... ?”

12 Bedtime picture chain

Use 3 or 4 pictures (pajamas, teeth, book, lights off). Child moves each finished card into a “done” pocket. Predictable steps mean fewer battles.

13 Praise the quiet

When your child lies calmly, whisper your praise: “I love how your body is resting.” Quiet behavior is easy to miss, so notice it on purpose.

Sample evening flow (about 5 minutes each, only where it fits):

Dinner ask for it > **Countdown** to bath > **Bath** label words > **Pictures** bedtime chain > **Lights off** praise quiet

© 2026 AutismRoutineHub

Toolkit, Tracker & Wrap-Up

Habits that make every micro-moment work | Your 7-day challenge

Your pocket toolkit

Specific praise

Name exactly what went well.
Example: “You waited so patiently!”

Immediate reward

Deliver the good thing within a few seconds.
Example: Cheer right as the shoe goes on.

Prompt, then fade

Give the smallest help needed, then do less each time.
Example: Point to the shoe, then just look at it, then nothing.

Quick tally

Note a win in 10 seconds.
Example: A tick on a sticky note or your phone.

Three mistakes to skip

Too much at once

One skill per micro-moment.

Waiting for perfect

Reward progress, not only finished results.

Ending on a struggle

Make it easier, get one success, then stop.

My 7-day micro-moment challenge

Day	Routine	Micro-moment #	Win?	Notes
Mon			○	
Tue			○	
Wed			○	
Thu			○	
Fri			○	
Sat			○	
Sun			○	

Working with a BCBA? Share these ideas with your child's Board Certified Behavior Analyst first so everything fits your child's goals. For serious challenges such as aggression or self-injury, get professional guidance rather than going it alone.

© 2026 AutismRoutineHub. All rights reserved.

Five minutes is small. Repeated daily, it is a lot.