Schedule Jigsaw Puzzle

Scheduling the programming day can feel like solving a puzzle. There are many pieces and parts involved in child-development and school-age programming. You can use this tool to help staff understand the importance of including all of the elements of the programming day. It is also a great tool for identifying areas of the schedule that are unbalanced. Here's how to use the tool:

1. Cut apart the puzzle pieces on one of the following pages. Use one page per staff member, and be sure to keep the individual puzzles separate. School-age programs may find the first puzzle has enough pieces (10 pieces). Child-development programs may prefer the second puzzle (26 pieces).
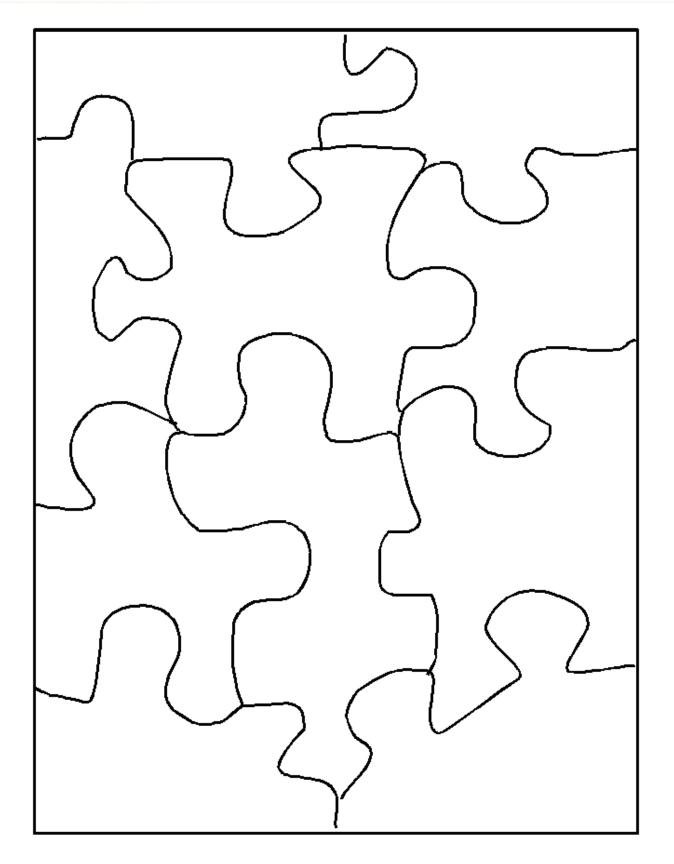
   Note: You can also choose to leave the puzzles intact for this activity. Simply ask staff to write one step of their schedule in each piece, color, and reflect. (See sample in separate PDF.)

2. Ask staff to write one piece of their daily schedule on each puzzle piece. Be sure to include all parts of the day and be specific. It's best to write "transition to breakfast," "wash hands," "eat breakfast," "clean up," "move to carpet" on separate pieces rather than just writing "Breakfast" on one piece. If the puzzles do not offer enough pieces, consider separating morning and afternoon onto separate puzzles.

3. Using the categories from this lesson, ask staff to color each puzzle piece.
   a. Free choice time = green
   b. Outdoor time = blue
   c. Adult-guided time (large and small groups) = red
   d. Transitions = yellow
   e. Routines = orange
   f. Other = purple

4. Ask staff to assemble their puzzles.

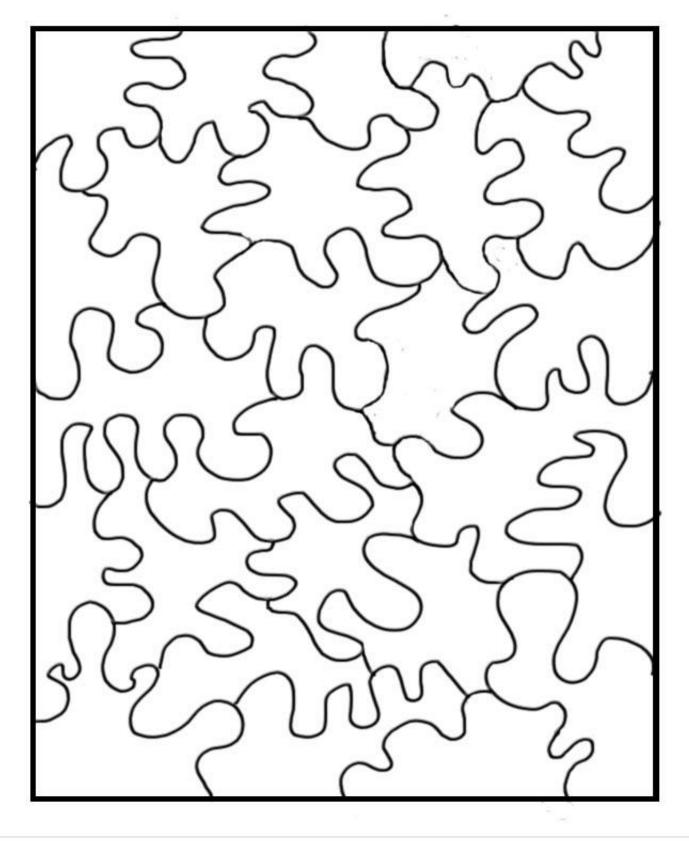5. Once puzzles are assembled, guide reflection.

Questions for Reflection

1. How many puzzle pieces did you color green? Blue? Red? Yellow? Orange? Purple?
2. Does any particular color dominate your puzzle? If so, which one(s)? Were you surprised?
3. If a particular color dominates your puzzle, is this a problem?
4. Which colors do not appear much on your puzzle?
5. How could you introduce more balance to your puzzle?
6. Often yellow and orange dominate the puzzles. If this is the case for you, how can you make sure this is learning time?
7. This puzzle does not show how long certain parts of your day last. When you take that into account, do you think your day is balanced?