

ROUTINES: Being a parent is both rewarding and challenging at the same time. Add parenting to your other job and now you have two full time jobs! One that pays you money to pay the bills and the other that pays you in hugs and kisses! We need our jobs to provide for our families and we need our families to fulfill our hearts! With both jobs comes STRESS! Routines can help to alleviate and reduce this stress.

All parents want their children to get their day off to a “Good Start!” They want them to be well rested, focused, and energized to start a new day of fun and learning. Creating a consistent morning routine and bedtime routine will help to relieve the stress. Young children need and thrive on routine. They like to know what is expected and like the predictability of routines in their day.

Morning Routine:

- Wake your child approximately the same time each morning.
- Allow plenty of time so your child is not rushed to wake up and get started. Every child is different. Some jump right out of bed and others need to stretch and lay awake awhile.
- The night before, you and your child can pick out the clothes to wear for the next day. If your child wants to change his mind about what to wear in the morning, tell him he will have to wear these clothes and he can pick what he wants for tomorrow.
- Put your child’s sneakers with his clothes or by the door. Always in the same spot so you are not looking for them when you have to leave.
- The night before, set your table for breakfast and ask your child what he may want to eat in the morning. Think of foods you can prepare ahead of time. You can make pancakes on the weekend, refrigerate, and microwave in the morning. Cereal can be poured in bowls and covered with plastic wrap. Juice and milk can be poured in cups and stored with lids in the refrigerator overnight.
- Set a timer to let your child know breakfast is over whether he has eaten or not. If he has not eaten, he will eat the next time if he gets really hungry. Just say to your child that you must not have been very hungry maybe tomorrow you will be hungrier. Do not take the food in the car. Breakfast is over and it is now time to get ready to walk out the door for school. You can also give a 5 minute warning to prepare your child.
- The night before, put all things needed for school by the door or in the car.
- Your child does not need to watch TV in the morning either. This way you are setting the tone that morning is the time to get ready for your day at school.
- Be consistent with your morning routine and always praise your child for helping to get out the door.

Bedtime Routine:

- Make sure your child gets to bed at approximately the same time every night and that he will get plenty of sleep so you can wake him early enough to get ready for school without hurrying.
- Have your child take his bath right before bedtime. Allow plenty of time for the bath. Bath time is a soothing and fun time playing in the water. Helping to calm your child down to get ready to sleep.
- After bath, it is story time and to bed.
- Your child does not need to have a drink or snack once in bed. She can have those things prior to bath time.
- Give a kiss and hug and say “Goodnight”.
- Again be consistent with your bedtime routine.

Good Luck! Hope these suggestions help you or reinforce what you are already doing. Sometimes all you need to do is just change or readjust one aspect of your routine. Time management and organization really do help to reduce stress in your lives so the result can be positive, quality time with your child.

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