

School Readiness

Getting back into a routine

After so much time away from school the family routines will have got slightly messed up. You need to think about the future and in a few weeks' time children will be going back to school and **now** is a good time to re-establish/start a routine.

A **routine** helps your **child** understand the balance between enjoyable tasks such as play, and functional tasks such as brushing their teeth.

A good routine reduces stress. When a **child** has a predictable daily **routine**, it reminds them that they are in a secure, loving environment

Every family needs routines.

They help to organize life and keep it from becoming too chaotic. Children do best when routines are regular, predictable, and consistent

Routines can help **children** understand time and time management.

Routines can help **children** get used to having chores.

Routines can establish **important** habits such as brushing teeth, hair and washing hands.

Routines can strengthen relationships by focusing on time together.



1. Establishes expectations

Rather than having a power struggle about picking up toys at the end of the day or taking a bath, a child becomes accustomed to knowing when “pick up time” and “bath time” are.

Children begin to expect and complete activities without issue. As the parent, you become a partner in that routine, rather than the person who is telling the child to “do this” and “not do this.”

2. Creates a calmer household

Because the child, and other family members, know what to expect, stress and anxiety are reduced.



3. Gives your child confidence and independence

With a routine, a child will learn over time when it's time to brush their teeth or put on their night clothes. They will take pride in knowing what they are supposed to do – and doing it by themselves.



4. Helps you (the parent) remember important things

Whether it's ensuring your child takes their medicine every day or remembering to pay the bills every month, a routine helps you stay on track.

In the midst of busy family life, you'll be able to keep track of the important details – allowing for a more stress free household and quality time together as a family.

5.. Offers your child an opportunity to get excited about what's ahead

If your child knows what's on the schedule, they anticipate and look forward to future events – such as going to the park on Friday afternoons or spending time with Dad on Sunday mornings.

6. Provides opportunity for special “daily rituals”

When you build something into your day, like snuggling and reading to your child before bed, you instil special moments or “daily rituals.”

These dedicated times create increased bonding and connection with your child every day. Rather than just moving from one activity to the next, you have quality, relaxing time built into each day.

The Importance of Flexibility

While establishing and maintaining routine has a wealth of benefits, it's vital to also remain flexible. Spontaneity and creativity are important factors in a child's life. For example, the breakfast dishes can wait if there is an exciting animal in the back garden or a special event or festival happening in the family.

How to Set a Daily Routine for Your Child

Step 1

Establish the important times such as meal times, snack times, naptimes and bedtime.

Because these affect how well your child is able to sleep and eat, these items should come first.

If you currently have no schedule, gradually move to a consistent routine

For example, you may wish to set up a regular bedtime first. Then, you can add in regular mealtimes and bath times.

Step 2

Practice patience. Setting a schedule may be hard for your child at first, but they will become accustomed to it.

Try not to become impatient or frustrated if the routine takes time to become “regular” for your child.



Step 3

Add “helpful” elements to each part of the routine.

For instance, you may wish to add in a regular 10 minute reading and snuggling time with your child before bed. This helps them wind down and feel ready to sleep.

Step 4

Work toward consistency and make room for flexibility.

In order for a routine to stick, you’ll need to make sure you keep it as regular as possible. However, stay open to flexibility, especially for holidays and special events, so your child’s mood doesn’t become solely dependent on eating at a specific time, for example.



Step 5

Establish special times with your child.

Whether it's a regular trip to grandma's house or walking the dog together, create expectations and routine of family time.

Step 6

Adjust as needed.

As the months go on, you'll start to see what's working and not working for the family. A routine is meant to *help* the family, not hinder it. Be sure your routine is healthy and positive for your child and other family members.

The child will know what comes next. They will feel valued because they are included in the plans and don't feel as if they're being forced to do something.

