

Routines Tip Sheet

What are Routines?

A routine is a predictable activity or regular program that typically occurs at a specific time of day and/or in a specific order. Routines are regular procedures and/or a sequence of actions regularly followed.

Why Do they Matter?

In order to organize and keep life from becoming chaotic, families need routines. Children do best when their lives are consistent and predictable. Routines can help minimize tantrums and problem behavior. Routines help children to feel safe and secure. When adults provide environments that feel safe, children can trust others to take care of them and meet their needs and focus on their world.

Tip #1 - Balance

- Be sure to find a balance between healthy “order” and rigidity. Too much structure does not allow children a choice and doesn’t teach flexibility.

Tip #2- Morning Routines

- Prepare the night before.
- Be positive.
- Have a healthy breakfast.
- Have a routine for saying “goodbye” such as a hug and, “Have a good day.”

Tip #3 - Structured Day for Learning

- Create a visual schedule for the day for predictability and time management. Review schedule with your child.
- Use checklists or shorter visual schedules for task expectations.

Tip #3 Evenings

- Healthy dinner with family members who are available together at the table and free of television and phones.

- Have conversation with each other and negative comments and criticism are discouraged.

(Tip #4)- Bedtime

- Set a specific and consistent time for bed based on the child's age.
- Create nighttime rituals such as bath, brushing teeth, storytime, conversation, songs.
- Avoid exciting games and activities that do not promote calm.

Source Caring for Your School-Age Child: Ages 5 to 12 (Copyright © 2004 American Academy of Pediatrics)