



FROM THE GROWING KIDS' PARENTING RESOURCE LIBRARY

The Importance of Keeping a Schedule

Children need to have a sense of security and stability in a nurturing environment. One of the ways children gain that sense is to have things they can count on. Valuable lessons are learned from children having an organized routine they follow- on a daily basis.

Think about the difference that having a calm morning routine makes, versus one of total chaos and shouting. I know my effectiveness in getting things done in the morning, once my kids were off to school, was dependent on how smoothly everyone got dressed, ate breakfast, got ALL of their things together and arrived at school early without rushing!

Start SIMPLY and make it VISUAL

Have a calm family discussion about what tasks are needed to be done before leaving for school.

Make a list with no more than 6 "to do's" to follow. Younger kids can make pictures as reminders. If kids have preferences as to how they want to be awakened —include that. Example: alarm, Dad singing, having the dog jump on them! If a 5-minute warning wake-up call is needed, include that as well; just be sure to WRITE IT on the schedule so all agree.

Make NO ASSUMPTIONS- about what needs to be done. Brushing teeth and getting dressed might seem like items you shouldn't have to write down on the list, but for a routine to be learned and maintained everything needs to be listed.

Make a sample visual schedule

6:30 Get up

Brush teeth

Get dressed

Eat breakfast

Put lunch in backpack

DAY: <input type="checkbox"/>		
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Educational Programs For Brightly Brained Learners.

You can add a positive/upbeat statement about the day! "Have a great day", "I will do well on my math test"

The same kind of chart can be made for a bedtime routine. In order to have a smooth transition from an active day to sleep, it is necessary for our bodies to slow down. A routine can effectively train our body to relax so that sleep is possible.

Again, keep it simple, positive and visual.

Example: bath/shower, put clothes in hamper, brush teeth, lay out clothes for morning, read a story.

A Visual Schedule is a "**must have routine**" for completing school homework. Get out of the verbal habit of saying "How much homework do you have?" Replace it with a visual checklist of what needs to be completed. Be sure to include a break and some fun activity so that kids - and parents - have a positive experience, as well as a sense of accomplishment as items are crossed off as they are completed.

Even on days when there is less homework, make sure there is some routine that is consistent with every other day. EVERY DAY should include READING of some kind. This is different than when you read to your child before bedtime.

Example: snack, spelling, math, exercise, play time, TV, reading

Besides making routine just "to do" lists, be sure to include routines that can develop into family traditions. Family meals are important for many things, not the least of which is language development and learning to listen!

Family game night or Sunday Night Pancake/Waffle Night are examples of how planning a specific activity into your family schedule can build structure and confidence into a child's life.

It is easy to become overwhelmed. Making routines a part of your entire family's life will make it possible for you to do more!

Our children thrive on consistency and structure. Start simply and observe how routines can actually build confidence and independence.