

BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES



The Remarkable Role of Routines

Predictability is powerful.



Maintaining family routines is essential for raising children who feel safe and

confident. When home life is predictable, outside chaos and life's unexpected occurrences are more manageable for kids.

Family routines also benefit parents. Structure and predictability limit behavior issues.



New parents will be less frazzled if they agree on mealtimes and bed time before baby arrives.



However, baby's feeding needs must be prioritized and incorporated into any definite scheduling needs,



such as when to make dinner and what time a parent needs to get up for work.

Parents can encourage even young babies to associate a dark bedroom, the whir of a humidifier, and limited interaction with nighttime sleep.

Once the pediatrician says baby is gaining well, longer night time sleep can be encouraged by setting up a bedtime routine, such as reading a story, singing a song, gently massaging, and changing into sleepwear before a last feeding.

Be sure to add tooth brushing and toileting to a toddler's bedtime routine, and expect young children

When children don't have structure, they make up their own rules and use negative behavior to get your attention.

- Jo Frost

to awaken at the same time every day whether the parent wants to sleep in or not.

When choices are built in, children are more likely to value and follow routines. Allow young children to select from two outfits when it's time to get dressed. At mealtime, let school-aged children choose between setting the table or clearing the dishes. Teens can choose the time to focus on homework.



Dad's Corner

Add something to daily routines that both you and your children will enjoy!

See the next page for
Tips on Creating Remarkable Routines!

Building Routines that Everyone Values

Whether your family is a single parent household or a multi-generational unit with many children, a daily schedule works best if it is:

R

Realistic:

- If you can't stick to 7am breakfast, don't include it!
- If you cannot stand reading that book every night, remove it from bed time options!

O

Open to change over time:

- As children take on after-school activities and Mom's work hours change, routines should be flexible
- Allow children to add their own features to a routine to support cooperation (put a doll to bed, call grandma at bedtime)



U

Useful to all Family Members:

- If older children need defined limits for using screens/TV, incorporate something for baby, such as "Mommy & Me" time
- Include older children in putting parameters around bed times for younger children, such as establishing quiet hours

T

Time-Oriented: associate routines with chunks of time and stick to the plan with minimal adjustments

I

Important to You: hold onto routines that are most meaningful for your family

N

Natural: establish routines for necessary tasks only, such as eating, hygiene, bed time, and home work

E

Easy to Maintain!

Ask your Support Specialist for Ideas to:

- Discover what Routines are Important to Your Family
- Establish Your Own Routines
- Address Behaviors with Routines