



School Readiness Tip Sheet

Routines

A routine is a regular way of doing things in a particular order. Routines are important because they can help organize life and reduce stress in the family. Every family needs routines. Routines give children a sense of security and help them develop self-regulation.

Here are some benefits you will see when you put routines in place in your home:

- Children feel more in control when they know what to expect. Children who know what to expect are more confident in themselves and the world around them.
- Routines help children learn to trust that others will take care of them and meet their needs. There will be less need for them to seek attention with negative behaviors.
- Routines help children develop self-control because they learn they have to wait until a certain time to do a particular activity.
- Routines develop responsibility and independence because children will be able to do more things on their own since they know what comes next.
- Routines help take away power struggles between parent and child. When there is a routine in place, there will be fewer arguments about what is expected.
- Routines at home help prepare children for the routines of the school day.
- Routines help adults manage the stress that comes from handling all the tasks during a busy day. When parents are less stressed, children get more positive attention from them.

How to establish a routine:

- Start by planning a routine for a difficult time of the day.
- Plan with your child so he or she can have a say in some parts of the routine.
- Write down the steps of the routine or make pictures of each step and post it so everyone can see it.
- Be patient and follow the routine as posted every day because it may take some time for your family to learn the new routine.
- Let your child know ahead of time if there will be a change in a routine. Talk about why a change is needed and if it is a one-time change or if the routine will be different in some way from now on.

