



Establish Routines

Although no one enjoys monotony, both children and adults thrive with a certain amount of structure in their lives. Family routines, such as meals, meetings, exercise, outings, holiday observances and vacations, have dual purposes. In a practical way, routines help us schedule and complete the daily chores of living. They also help us forge stronger family bonds because they give us predictable, dependable times we can count on to be together.

A family routine can be as simple as walking the dog with your child or mowing the lawn together. Here are some other family routines that can make life easier and make being together more pleasant:



Routines for Kids

Children need routines to develop self-discipline, independence and self-esteem. Smaller children enjoy the nurturing routine of a bedtime story. Learning self-care routines, such as bathing and brushing their teeth, teaches children to be independent. Routine chores and errands, such as taking out the garbage, help children develop responsibility and a sense of contributing to the welfare of the family.

Make Mornings Routine

Mornings are a struggle in many homes as parents try to get themselves and their children out the door on time. You can make mornings easier by making sure everyone gets enough sleep and rises early enough to avoid rushing.

Do things the night before. After dinner, prepare lunch boxes and leave them in the refrigerator overnight, and set the breakfast table for the next morning. Encourage children to prepare backpacks

and bathe the night before. Help your children select their clothes for the next day before going to bed.

Dinner Routines

Dinners are one of the few times families are together during the day. Teach your children to help by clearing and setting the table. Older children can help with meal preparation one night a week. When it's time to sit down and eat, turn off the radio or TV, put aside the newspaper and enjoy each other's company.

Family Meetings

The predictable routine of a weekly family meeting can help knit your family into a more cooperative team. Make the meeting fun. Order pizza or prepare special snacks. Use the meeting to discuss goals, problems and family events and to assign household chores. Plan errands, shopping expeditions and special excursions with your children.