

“Let’s Groove”

All families need some type of routine to establish normalcy and a sense of security. Children fear the unknown – whether it’s the broccoli on their plate – or a big life change like moving to a different house or gaining a new sibling. While change is a learning opportunity, it can also be stressful for children. A normal routine brings comfort and consistency to a child’s life.

When you include meaningful and important elements into your family schedule, you’re letting your child know what your family values and what is important.

10 Reasons a Daily Routine is Important:

1. Helps your Child Get on a Schedule

Consistent routine will help your child and their “body clocks” with many day-to-day basics such as:

- Ability to take naps and sleep well at night
- Ability to eat healthy, full meals
- Regular bowel movements
- Healthy play and outdoor time
- Calm, relaxed behavior at “down times” during the day

For example, because your child and their body know it’s time to sleep, they are more easily able to wind down and rest.



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2. Creates Family Bonds

When a child knows what to expect and notices regular family activities, they begin to understand what’s important. This strengthens shared values, beliefs, and interests. The child, for example, might notice that sitting down and eating meals together is important to his/her family. They see that family worship time is valued. Even if your child is young, they will pick up on these traditions. The family bonds grow stronger by doing regular, important things together.

3. Expectations are Clear

Rather than having a power struggle about picking up toys at the end of the day or taking a bath, a child becomes accustomed to knowing when pick up time, bath time, and bedtime are. Children begin to expect and complete activities without issue. As the parent, you become a partner in that routine, rather than the person who is telling the child to “do this” and “not do this.”

4. Creates a Calmer Household

Because the child, and other family members, know what to expect, stress and anxiety are reduced. The child will know what comes next. They will feel valued because they are included in the plans and don’t feel as if they’re being forced to do something.



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5. Creates Confidence and Independence

With a routine, a child will learn over time when it’s time to brush their teeth or put on their pajamas. They will take pride in knowing what they are supposed to do – and doing it by themselves. Rather than always being told what needs to happen, your child will feel confident to go ahead and be in charge of themselves. When children feel empowered and independent, they are less likely to rebel or retaliate.

6. Creates Healthy Habits

From brushing teeth regularly to going to bed at the same time to daily exercise, routines help establish healthy habits. As they get older, they’ll have more self-discipline in terms of healthy habits.

7. Helps Parents Keep Track of the Important Things

Whether it’s ensuring your child takes their medicine every day or remembering to pay the bills every month, a routine helps adults stay on track too. In the midst of busy family life, you’ll be able to keep track of the important details – allowing for a more stress-free household and quality time together as a family.



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8. Your Child Can Get Excited about What’s Ahead

If your child knows what’s on the schedule, they anticipate and look forward to future events – such as going to the park on Friday afternoons, spending time with dad every Sunday morning, or Family Game Night. When these activities are routine your child will begin to look forward to them with joy!

9. Creates Special “Daily Rituals”

You can create special things that are on your schedule every day--- like snuggling and reading to your child before bed, play time outside, and don’t forget the daily family worship! These dedicated times create increased bonding and connection with your child every day. Rather than just moving from one activity to the next, you have quality, relaxing time built into each day.

10. Creates Stability during Times of Stress

Changes and stresses impact a child’s life and sense of security, such as a change in school system, a new brother or sister, or being quarantined! When the family has an established a routine, normalcy is present in the child’s life, no matter what is going on. A child finds calmness, stability and love through elements of routine, such as family dinners or regular Thursday trips to the playground.



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Getting Started

Work together as a family to create a schedule for each week. Post it on your refrigerator or some other place where it can be viewed by all family members. Keep in mind that some things will be daily (wakeup, bedtime, mealtimes, family worship, etc.). These are things you will do every day while others, may be once a week (family fun night or church), or even once a year (family vacation). Either way, it's important to include everything in your weekly schedule. Your children will learn to look at it and look forward to things that may be coming up later in the week.

Things to Include:

Daily	Weekly	Periodically
Wake-up Time Mealtimes Naptime Chore Time Homework Time Reading Time Free Time Exercise Time Family Worship Time Bedtime	Family Fun Night Church Time	Family Vacation Special Family Outing



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It is never too late to start a routine. You set a good example for your child when you say, "The way that we have been doing things has not been working. We are going to try something new. Here is our new schedule." While you should definitely be open to the fact that the schedule may need some adjustment, you also need to be firm in sticking to the new routine. At first, your child will try to get you to break the routine, but do not give in to old habits. Young children need both consistency and limits. Know ahead of time that your child will have difficulty adjusting and be prepared with how you will handle this resistance.

The earlier you begin to order your child's life, the easier it will be. When you stick to a routine, you teach your child how to arrange their time in a manner that is efficient, productive, and cuts down on stress. This sense of order is not only important for making your young child feel secure at this moment, but it will also allow your child to internalize an automatic sense of how to organize her own life as she grows up.

Happy Scheduling! Let's Get in the Groove!



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Visual Schedule

We all have schedules! Some are just lists, some are on a calendar that is held up with magnets on your refrigerator and some are on your smart phones. Schedules help us stay focused, complete tasks on time and keep us aware of what needs to be done next. Our kids can benefit from a visual calendar too! Join me in making a creative visual calendar!

Benefits

- Increased independence
- Reduces anxiety in some children who need a visual reminder and consistency
- Helps children develop self discipline when they know what needs to be done first
- Best of all, it can improve success in your child's performance at home, with self-care, and planning ahead

Let's Make a Visual Schedule!

Supplies

Copy of the visual schedule labels

Magazines

Black Sharpie

Scissors

Ruler

Glue

Optional: Small Desk Laminator

Poster board



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Additional Resources for Your Visual Schedule

Printables

<https://thisreadingmama.com/visual-school-schedule-free/>

<https://www.andnextcomesl.com/2018/01/free-visual-schedule-printables.html>

Where to Download Photos

<https://unsplash.com/>

<https://pixabay.com/>

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