

# Safe kids • Healthy kids • Happy kids

## Routines and Rituals Make Family Life Easier

Research tells us that children who live a life of love and structure manage their behavior better than kids raised in chaos.

Rituals and routines help young children organize their world. They also help parents organize their family.

### Routines:

- Let young kids know what is expected of them.
- Keep family life predictable and under control.
- Form a basic daily structure that makes kids feel secure.
- Transition kids from one activity to another. For example, change from home to daycare or playtime to dinnertime or bedtime.

### As a family create your own routines.

- Follow them daily.
- Explain to children ahead of time if a routine must be changed. Tell them how it will change.
- Stick with a new routine for 4 – 6 weeks before expecting your young child to follow it.

### What makes a good morning routine?

Start the night before. Kids should help:

- Pack their backpacks and set them by the door.
- Find their shoes and place them by the door.
- Check the weather and lay out clothes to wear.

### In the morning, kids:

- Dress and eat breakfast.
- Brush their teeth and hair, and wash their face.

Usually, this routine makes mornings less rushed and less stressed. Everyone knows their job. Everyone feels in control.

Routines also help young kids develop self-discipline and skills. A parent's job is to teach them to perform tasks: wash hands, brush teeth, and decide what items to put in the backpack.

### Establish rituals for your family:

- Pick rituals you had as a child. Tell your children your ritual story.
- Find new rituals. Practice them routinely as your child grows.

- Talk about your family rituals. Take pictures. Write in journals.

Rituals are valued and often repeated from generation to generation. Filled with emotion, they help form our most cherished memories. They connect family and friends.

Rituals are specific to each family. For example, a movie night can be a common weekly ritual among families. Parents and kids gather pillows, blankets and popcorn, and watch a favorite movie – together. No matter what happens during the week, kids can count on movie night.

Use routines and rituals to guide your child's behavior and help your family feel secure.



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