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HOW TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE ROUTINES

Routines have some incredible benefits to family life. They are of course the way in which you and your family organise your days/lives. They contribute to your children's social and emotional development in more ways than you might first imagine too.

WHY ROUTINES MATTER?

Routines provide stability and security

Children thrive in environments where they feel secure. Routines create a sense of predictability, helping children understand what comes next. This predictability reduces anxiety and builds trust, allowing children to focus on being open to learning, exploring and engaging with their surroundings.

Routines support emotional regulation

Consistent routines help children manage their emotions by providing clear expectations and boundaries. Knowing when meals, naps/sleep, chores or playtime will happen can reduce tantrums and emotional outbursts, fostering a calm and supportive atmosphere.

Routines encourage independence and responsibility

Repetition of routines allows children to anticipate and prepare for daily activities. Over time, this familiarity enables them to take on tasks independently, such as cleaning up toys, washing hands, or doing household chores. These small steps build confidence and a sense of responsibility.

Routines facilitate smooth transitions

Transitions, such as moving from one activity to another, can be challenging for children. Routines help minimize resistance and confusion by setting expectations. Clear signals, like songs or visual cues, can further ease these transitions, making the day flow more smoothly.

Routines promote mental wellbeing for everybody

Routines can benefit adults too, in all the ways above, making life feel fairly safe and predictable, it can also reduce stress and help us feel more productive, focused and ready to have fun!

CONSIDER WHEN TO INTRODUCE ROUTINES;

Define anchor points in your day such as: sleeping, eating, bathing, dressing, physical activity, educational activities, bonding with peers and family members, and add activities to create routine from there.

Most of us are doing these daily, but perhaps some of these are stressful stages of the day, feeling disorganised or you may feel amid a battle. This is the perfect reason to consider introducing routines.

Routines are also a great opportunity to think about doing things with your child rather than for or to them, which can help develop those independence skills and feelings of responsibility and pride for your child.



TOP TIPS TO ESTABLISH ROUTINES WITH CHILDREN:

1. **Start small:** Focus on one aspect of routine at a time. Only introduce more routine once you feel you have mastered the last.
2. **Use a daily routine chart:** A visual chart helps children understand what they need to do and what comes next. You can make this together to make it fun and include everyone in the process. This may well be key in the early days of a new routine, but once established and practised for a while, the need for the chart will lessen with time, as new habits will be learnt and consolidated. Including your child in the process of creating new routines is a way to help them feel included and significant.
3. **Be patient and consistent:** Find what works and stick to it. We are sometimes too quick to throw in the towel and assume something isn't working. But everyone and everything needs time and patience to have the opportunity to show its true potential. So once you have decided on a routine as a family, try to practice this for 2-3 weeks before reviewing its worth or making tweaks.
4. **Flexibility:** this may sound counterproductive, but there will be a need for change and flexibility sometimes. Although an overall routine will need to remain, switching round the order of activities within that routine can help keep your child interested and enthused.
5. **Make it fun:** This can be when you first discuss routines with your child or first set up a new routine, but remember, fun can inject energy into the most mundane of tasks and remove the feeling of something being a chore into more of a game. Turn everyday tasks into fun events that involve music, dancing, listening to audio books, dressing up...
6. **Working together.** If you have more than one child in your family, consider individual routines as well as having goals that allow teamwork or individual contribution that helps everyone achieve the end goal, rather than competition. This should help avoid a winner/loser mentality and the potential fall out that can often accompany this.

SOME RESOURCES YOU MIGHT FIND USEFUL:

1. [Routines and boundaries / Barnardo's Family Space](#)
2. [The Importance of Routine for Children: Creating a Consistent Schedule - Childcare Network](#)
3. [Routines: Opportunities for learning and connecting - The Spoke – Early Childhood Australia's Blog](#)
4. A personal story [The importance of routine - Mind](#)
5. Songlists with links to you tube and spotify playlists. [Home - Nancy Kopman](#)

**CHECK OUT OUR FREE
PARENT RESOURCES IN OUR
FAMILY ZONE FOR SOME
DOWNLOADABLE ACTIVITIES,
USEFUL LINKS & RESOURCES**

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As always, if you need any help with making this work for your family, please do reach out on marijana@move-more.org or jen@move-more.org. We are more than happy to help you.

#EveryChildThrives