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Queensland Government

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How a morning routine can help your child at school

Starting the day in a calm and predictable way can help children feel ready for their day at school.



Starting the day in a calm and predictable way can help children feel ready for their day at school. As any parent knows, kids don't always understand time in the same way we do, so setting up regular morning routines can help keep things on track.

Prepare the night before

Try and prepare as much as possible the night before. For example, you or your child could make their school lunch, put out their school uniform for the next day, and pack their bag for school.

Read the notes sent home from school

Most schools send home notes or emails to let parents and carers know when there is something special happening at school such as sports days, excursions, or special school assemblies. Try and read these notes so you are up to date with what is happening and can be prepared. Help your child put notes in their calendar or school journal to help you both remember. Make a habit of talking to your child about what is happening the next day so there are no surprises in the morning when you are trying to get out the door.

Create a weekly schedule

Consider creating a weekly schedule listing what is happening each day at school. For example, you could list which days your children have swimming, PE, music or extra-curricular activities before and after school. See if you can involve your kids in making the schedule, so they feel they are part of the process and will be more likely to keep to it. Let your teenager come up with their own plan for their routine and encourage them to document it so you can talk about it together. When the schedule is ready, put it somewhere prominent so everyone can see it.

Wake up gently

Consider giving your child an alarm clock to help them wake up. Suggest they set it for 15 minutes before they need to be up so they don't feel rushed getting out of bed. If they can wake up without feeling rushed, the morning is more likely to go smoothly. Remember it can take at least 21 days to form a habit and adjust to a new routine, so don't expect the first morning to go like clockwork.

Make a checklist

Encourage your children to do things for themselves. This will make them feel more in control of their morning. Put a daily checklist up so they can work through what they need to do to get ready for school. The checklist could include things like: 'wake up', 'get dressed', 'have breakfast', 'brush teeth', 'make lunch', 'pack schoolbag', and 'put on shoes and socks'. Older kids should be able to make their own checklist and include things like 'homework', 'text books', 'music gear', 'sports shoes', 'tennis racket', 'bus pass', and 'tuckshop money'.

Try and remain calm

Try to stay calm. Most children take their cues from the adults around them. If you become stressed, this will make them feel stressed too. If you can remain calm, your child is more likely to start their day in a positive frame of mind which will help them make the most of their day at school. And remember, tomorrow is another day. If today didn't go well, then tomorrow is an opportunity for a fresh start.

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