

Morning routine for school: tips

Key points

- **A morning routine helps children arrive at school ready to learn and play.**
- **Think about what you need to achieve in the mornings. You can probably do many things the night before.**
- **When you've worked out a morning routine, write it up and display it where everyone can see it.**
- **Plenty of sleep, time and positive attention can help children cooperate with school morning routines.**

Morning routine for school: the whys and hows

Staying calm and being organised in the morning will help you and your child feel positive about the day ahead. It will also help you reduce stress, which is good for everyone's wellbeing.

One of the best ways to stay calm and get organised is to have a **morning routine for school**. A routine will help your child know what's happening and remember what they need to do.

Planning a routine for school mornings

The first step in planning your morning routine for school could be to **make a weekly schedule** with reminders of what your child needs for school each day. For example, your child might need:

- a library bag on Monday
- sports clothes on Wednesday
- show and tell on Friday.

The next step is to **list the regular activities and things** you need to do to get ready for school each day. You can split these activities into things you can do the night before and things that have to be done in the morning.

Things you might do **the night before** include:

- checking what your child needs for the next day
- packing your child's bag
- signing school notes
- laying out uniforms
- making lunches.

Things that have to be done **in the morning** include:

- getting out of bed
- having a healthy breakfast
- cleaning teeth, washing and getting dressed
- leaving the house on time.

To get to work and school on time, **you probably need to do your morning activities at certain times**. So when you're planning your routine, it's a good idea to think about:

- how long morning activities take
- what time morning activities need to happen.



If you know there are things that might cause conflict in the morning, it can really help to deal with these the night before. For example, you might know that your child wants to wear sneakers to school rather than school shoes. You and your child might be able to come up with a solution together if you talk about the issue the night before.

Example routine for school mornings

Here's an example of what a school morning routine might look like:

- 7.30 am: your child gets up.
- 7.40 am: your child eats breakfast.
- 8.00 am: your child washes their face, brushes their teeth, gets dressed and puts on shoes.

- 8.20 am: your child puts lunch in their bag and looks at books while you get ready to go.
- 8.25 am: you help your child put on sunscreen.
- 8.30 am: you and your child leave for school.



Your family will have its own way of doing things. When you've worked out a morning routine to suit your family (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/family-life/routines-rituals-rules/daily-routines-for-your-family-four-steps>), write it up and display it where everyone can see it. You could include pictures to make the routine easier for your child to follow.

Tips to help your school morning routine work well

Once you've worked out your routine, these tips can help things go smoothly on school mornings:

Tips to help you organise your time

- Get your child to have a bath or shower the night before, so you don't need to make time for this in the morning.
- Make sure your child gets to bed with plenty of time for a good night's sleep (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/sleep/better-sleep/sleep-better-tips>). This will help your child wake up refreshed.
- Get up 15-30 minutes earlier than you think you need to. This will give you more time in the morning.
- Think about an alarm for children who find it hard to wake up or don't like getting out of bed.

Tips to encourage cooperation and good behaviour

- Tackle the morning as positively as you can. Good moods can be infectious. You and your child could do this by sharing one thing that you're each looking forward to during the day.
- Give your child calm, clear instructions about what you want them to do, and follow up with specific praise (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/connecting-communicating/connecting/praise>) as soon as they start to cooperate. You might need to remind younger children more often about what they're meant to be doing and when.

- Encourage children to do more for themselves as they get older and more independent. For example, a 5-year-old can do things like putting their lunch box in their bag. An 8-year-old can get dressed on their own, make their own breakfast, and tidy up after themselves.
- Cut down on distractions like television, tablets and other devices, unless screen time is a special treat for being ready on time.
- Give your child positive attention for good behaviour (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/behaviour/behaviour-management-tips-tools/attention>), rather than attention for arguing, whining or stalling. For example, say 'I love the way you're eating up your toast' rather than 'Stop playing with your toast'. This will encourage the behaviour you want to see on school mornings.
- Make it fun – for example, try our 'Beat the buzzer' (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/behaviour/behaviour-management-tips-tools/beat-the-buzzer>) game to encourage your child to be ready on time.



Sometimes children drag out the time in the morning as a way to avoid school. If you think this might be happening with your child, it's a good idea to check in with your child's teacher to make sure there aren't any problems that are causing school refusal (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/school-learning/school-refusal/school-refusal>).

References

Crawford, M. (2016). *Early intervention every day! Embedding activities in daily routines for young children and their families*. Brooks Publishing.

Konen, T., Dirk, J., Leonhart, A., & Schmiedek, F. (2016). The interplay between sleep behaviour and affect in elementary school children's daily life. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 150, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2016.04.003>.

Larsen, K.L., & Jordan, S.S. (2020). Organized chaos: Daily routines link household chaos and child behavior problems. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 29(4), 1094-1107. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01645-9>.

Maffeis, C., Fornari, E., Surano, M., Comencini, E., Corradi, M., Tommasi, M., Fasan, I., & Cortese, S. (2012). Breakfast skipping in prepubertal obese children: Hormonal, metabolic and cognitive consequences. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *66*(3), 314-321. <https://doi.org/10.1038/ejcn.2011.206>.

Mindell, J.A., & Williamson, A.A. (2018). Benefits of a bedtime routine in young children: Sleep, development, and beyond. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, *40*, 93-108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2017.10.007>.

Quach, J., Gold, L., Arnup, S., Sia, K.-L., Wake, M., & Hiscock, H. (2013). Sleep well–be well study: Improving school transition by improving child sleep: A translational randomised trial. *BMJ Open*, *3*(10). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2013-004009>.

Last updated or reviewed

08-09-2021

SUPPORTED BY



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Raising Children Network is supported by the Australian Government. Member organisations are the Parenting Research Centre and the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute with The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health.

At raisingchildren.net.au we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, gather and work. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

[Privacy statement](#) | [Terms of use](#)

© 2006-2022 Raising Children Network (Australia) Limited. All rights reserved.

Warning: This website and the information it contains is not intended as a substitute for professional consultation with a qualified practitioner.

This website is certified by Health On the Net Foundation (HON) and complies with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information

Standards for trustworthy health information.