



DARE to EXCEL:

Creating home environments that help kids succeed at school

Routines at home help children succeed at school; feel safe and secure; develop self-control, independence, and trust; and reduce impulsive behavior.

Morning Routines. Help kids start the day feeling good about themselves.

- Greet children with a smile and a positive comment. Avoid yelling or negative statements.
- Decide who wakes up whom and what must happen to be ready on time
- Pack a lunch or snack if needed.
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Avoid TV or computer time before school.
- Review afterschool schedule with your child.

Afterschool Routines. Vary routines by a child's age and involvement in activities.

- Plan a healthy snack.
- Provide transition time from school to home like physical activity, TV, reading, or texting.
- Avoid over-scheduling kids with activities. Allow time to readjust and "be home."
- Ask about the day, check for notes from school, or homework to be done.
- Plan a consistent time and place for homework - perhaps right after school or before bedtime with lots of light and no TV, cell phone, or iPod.
- Be available for questions about homework or identify someone who can help.

Bedtime Routines. When kids have a regular bedtime routine, they fall asleep faster and are up less at night. You may want to make a checklist and let kids check off tasks.

- Help kids get their backpacks and clothes ready for the next day.
- Check notes from school if you didn't have a chance to after school.
- Help your child remember routines before bed (e.g., homework, shower, brush teeth)
- Keep the house quiet an hour before bedtime. Avoid noisy games; turn off the TV, computer, and video games; turn down the lights; and keep cell phones out of the bedroom at night.

PROVEN PARENTING PRACTICES

Routines at home help kids learn

Learning at home helps kids learn at school

Setting limits with love helps kids learn at school

Good nutrition helps kids learn

Physical activity helps kids learn

Sleep helps kids learn

Community programs help kids learn at school



Why are mealtime routines *IMPORTANT?*

Mealtime can strengthen family communication and reinforce family values. Stronger family bonds make it easier to deal with problems that arise. Kids who eat regularly with their family do better in school. They are more likely to eat healthy foods, be emotionally content, have positive relationships with peers and have lower levels of stress. When kids help with mealtime, they practice skills such as teamwork and cooperation.

Mealtime guidelines to try with your family

- Keep meals simple to prepare.
- Allow one night to be a “kid’s choice” night.
- Have family meals one or two nights a week. Write the time on your calendar.

Family mealtime ideas

- Choose a place for family meals, be it at home, a restaurant, or in a park.
- Prepare soup in a crockery cooker or prepare other main dishes ahead of time.
- Serve healthy foods that are easy to prepare and fit your budget or add foods such as apples, celery sticks, and milk to take-out foods for a healthier meal.
- Let kids help select foods and prepare meals. Even small kids can help set a table.
- Think of questions to discuss during the meal, such as, “What is something funny that happened to you in the last week?” or “What one thing would make you happy today?”
- Keep mealtime pleasant. Unpleasant words lead to kids disliking family mealtime. Practice making positive comments, taking turns talking, and listening without interruption.
- Eliminate distractions — turn off the TV, radio, iPods, and cellphones.

KID-FRIENDLY *RECIPES*

APPLE LADYBUG TREATS

2 red apples
1 tablespoon peanut butter

¼ cup raisins
8 thin pretzel sticks

SLICE apple in half and place flat side down.

DAB peanut butter on back.

STICK raisins onto dabs for spots.

STICK one end of each pretzel into a raisin and press other end into apple fronts.



RESOURCES *AND* INFORMATION

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