



Work Life Services Newsletter January 2023

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How Routines Can Help Your Household Run More Smoothly

Routines are an important part of family life. Not only can they provide quality family time, but they can also help accomplish more than one thing at time. For example, when routines involve activities like chores done as a group, you can spend time with your family and get a household task accomplished.

They also don't have to be mundane; they can be fun events that the whole family looks forward to. When you and your family establish fun routines, you give the family something to look forward to. It doesn't have to be a major event; it can be something as simple as walking the dog together after dinner or seeing a movie together every Friday night.

Routines that Help Children Develop

Routines help children learn responsibility, self-confidence, and independence. They also give children stability, which is something all children need. For instance, younger children learn to count on a bedtime story every night as a routine, while older children learn self-care routines, like brushing teeth or flossing before bed. Consider letting older children take on routines that help the entire family, like taking out the garbage or washing the dishes. These types of routines help children create a sense of responsibility and show them the value in helping the whole family.

Make Mornings Easier with Routines

By establishing routines at night that prepare everyone for the next day, you can ensure that morning time is not a stressful time. For instance, by making lunch boxes or packing briefcases at night, you'll save time and stress in the morning. Encourage children to have nighttime routines that help them get ready for the next day, like packing their backpacks or picking out what they will wear to school the following morning. Also go over the next day's events, activities, carpools etc. In the hectic morning schedule it is often difficult for children to retain all the important scheduling information. If you go over it at night and then remind them in the morning they are more likely to know and understand the events of that day.

Make Dinners Easier with Routines

You can take some of the stress away from preparing and serving a meal if you have family routines in place. Children can help set the table, clear the table, and wash the dishes if age appropriate. Also, invite older children to take part in planning the meal: have them choose a recipe and help you make it once a week. As you eat, be sure to turn off the TV and put away any other entertainment materials; make it a routine to catch up on your daily events and share stories. If this is difficult to do every night, plan at least once or twice a week where everyone in the family must be around for a family dinner.

Make Family Meetings Fun

Some meetings can be boring, but family meetings don't have to be. Use the time to order pizza or takeout, and talk about important family topics, like upcoming events, chores, goals, or problems. You can also use this time to plan exciting future events, like vacations or special activities. You may want to couple this night with family game night. Once everyone has shared and the meeting has been wrapped up, whip out a game and start playing. This can also be a helpful tool for diffusing tension or conflict that was brought up during the meeting.