



Routines

from Y Teulu Cyfan team - Flintshire

We are a team based in Flintshire, helping parents with lots of different challenges, including behavioural issues and practical things too. We love seeing how making small changes can bring big results. It's amazing to see parents growing in confidence and feeling able to take control of situations they might previously have felt were too tricky.



Our goal is to make parents' lives easier by providing simple, easy to implement tips and techniques to make tricky times of the day (for example mornings and bedtime) easier for everyone.

There is no right and wrong when it comes to routines. Every family is unique, so it's about finding out what works for you. You might not get instant results, but with routines, you will quickly see what a big difference it can make to you and your family.

It's important to stick to a routine so everyone is clear about what is expected of them. It helps to build a sense of familiarity to the day. Everyone feels prepared and less stressed.

Another great thing about routines, is that they help children and teenagers develop a sense of responsibility and some basic skills like time management, which helps them later on in life. When children follow their routine with less supervision from you, it helps them to become more independent, which in turn is good for you.



When you have a consistent routine in place you will notice that your child will have more structure, and they may be calmer and more receptive as a result. They'll feel more safe, secure and in control, which will make them feel more confident.

Routines help parents too. If you're happy and relaxed and know things are going to get done, you'll be less stressed. Children pick up on parents' anxiety, and if you're feeling calm and in control, they will feel that too.

If routines are new to you, don't worry! It takes time to establish a new routine. We always tell parents not to be too hard on themselves; to just do their best and understand over time what works for them; no family is the same, and different situations arise all the time.



It might happen overnight, it might not, but starting with even the simplest routines will make a difference to everyone.



Why can mornings be so stressful?

When you're a parent, you have a lot of things to think about and limited time to get things done. You're balancing your own needs – like getting to work on time, sorting the pets out, and remembering to post important letters – with your child's needs.

So, having a morning routine can make a big difference.

If you don't have a set routine, things may not go according to plan – maybe your child can't find a book they need and becomes worried about it. It can throw your entire day out!

They'll be late for school and you'll be late for work; and the dog might not get walked... It doesn't take much for things to get chaotic.



A great way to start is by doing some prep work the night before. Anything you and your child can do the night before, do it. Maybe it's getting bags ready, putting shoes by the door or helping prepare their packed lunch, and even what goes into it.

Go through a checklist together where you both make sure you have everything ready – make it feel exciting!



If you have more than one child, having a routine can help in a big way, as chances are your children have a different 'body-clock'.

Top Tips for making routines fun & effective:

1. Make routines fun.

For example, you could let your child choose their own alarm clock, so they get up on time. Create checklists together – perhaps you could have a checklist each – and you make ticking each 'job' off as part of the game. Egg timers are great, as is trying to get everything done before a favourite song ends.



2. Get everyone in the family involved (even the youngest).

If you do this, you're not just telling them what to do, you're making them part of it. Maybe ask their opinion; for example 'Today is going to be a very busy day! How are we going to get everything done this morning?' Also recognise the differences between weekdays and the weekend (allowing for treats etc).

3. Use praise and encouragement when a routine goes well.

Children will then be more likely to respond to praise. Perhaps part of your morning routine includes a small reward if they get everything done – ten minutes with their toy, or screen time for example. If they don't get everything done, then the consequence is they don't get to do that.

4. Routine is a learning curve.

If your child doesn't stick to a routine and complains because they've forgotten something or they've missed out on doing something, don't be tempted to step in and 'fix' things. Let them see and understand what happens when they don't stick to a routine. Don't punish them or get angry, just let them find out for themselves.



5. Be consistent.

Your child will push back, and it might take a while to get used to something new, especially if they don't want to do it.



6. If you feel something isn't working, don't worry, just re-assess.

Find what works for you, and what works for your child. One size doesn't fit all when it comes to routines, so you'll need to find routines that work for all of you.

7. Be kind to yourself.

Routines will change depending on what's going on at the time. If you get it right three days out of five, you're doing a good job! Getting routines in place takes time, so you'll need to be flexible, and not give yourself a hard time if sometimes it doesn't go according to plan.

And remember you are doing the best you can.

For more information and advice on routines visit: gov.wales/giveittime

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