

Routines



A routine is doing something in the same way every day. Routines are important because they teach a child what to expect. This can help the child feel calm and happy. Knowing what is coming next also allows him to feel safe and ready to learn. There is no “right way” to make a routine. Just do what is good for you and your child.

Try this:

Start with everyday activities.

Create routines around the things you do each day, like meals, baths, or bedtime. Routines teach your child how to act during these daily activities.

Be consistent.

Do the same things in the same way. This lets your child know what is coming next and helps him feel secure. For example, each time you put your child to sleep, you might:

- › Sing a favorite song, like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
- › Read a book, or tell a story about when you were a child.
- › Talk to stuffed animals and say good night to them.
- › Hug good night.

Use routines to help with change.

Moving from one place or activity to another can be hard for a child. Routines help prepare him for changes that are about to come. If the child is prepared, he can move through the changes more easily and calmly. For example, is it time to leave the park? You might:

- › Give a warning: “We are leaving the park in two minutes. Do you want one last trip down the slide or ride on the swing?”
- › Tell what’s coming next: “We are going home now to have dinner.”

Be flexible.

Yes, routines need to be consistent. But your routines also need to change as your child grows and changes. It may be time to change when:

- › Your child drops a nap.
- › Your child loses interest in a certain routine.
- › You are visiting friends or family.

Born LearningSM is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child’s first teacher, Born Learning educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas. For more information, visit us online at www.bornlearning.org.



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