

Learning Coach Series

Module 1

Provide predictable structure and strong routines in the home.

Introduction

Teaching and following using strong routines in your home helps your family to be more calm. Following routines helps children become more independent and productive as learners.

Every home is different, but all children need structure and strong routines. “Why do kids need routines? Because routines give them a sense of security and help them develop self-discipline.”¹

Seven Benefits of Using Routines with Your Kids²

1. Routines help eliminate power struggles.

Routines eliminate power struggles because you aren't bossing the child around. This activity (brushing teeth, napping, turning off the TV to come to but every dinner) is just what we do at this time of day. The parent stops being the bad guy, and nagging is greatly reduced.

2. Routines help kids cooperate.

Routines help kids cooperate by reducing stress and anxiety for everyone. We all know what comes next. We get fair warning for transitions, and no one feels pushed around. Children learn that parents are not simply being arbitrary.

3. Routines help kids learn to take charge of their own activities.

Over time, kids learn to brush their teeth, organize their learning environment, etc., without constant reminders. Kids love being in charge of themselves. This feeling increases their sense of mastery and competence. Kids who feel more independent and in charge of themselves have less need to rebel and be oppositional.

4. Kids learn the concept of "looking forward" to things they enjoy...

Being able to “look forward” to something nice is an important part of making a happy accommodation with the demands of a schedule. He may want to go to the playground now, but he can learn that we always go to the playground in the afternoon, and he can look forward to it then.

5. Regular routines help kids get on a schedule.

Regular routines help kids get on a schedule, so that they fall asleep more easily at night.

6. Routines help parents build in those precious connection moments.

We all know that we need to connect with our children every day, but when our focus is on moving kids through the schedule to get them to bed, we miss out on opportunities to connect. If we build little connection rituals into our routine, they become habit. Try a snuggle with each child when you first see them in the morning, or a "recognition" ritual when you're first reunited: *"I see you with those beautiful gray eyes that I love so much!"* Rituals like these slow you down and connect you on a visceral level with your child, and if you do them as just "part of the routine" they build security as well as connection and cooperation.

7. Schedules help parents maintain consistency in expectations.

If everything is a fight, parents end up settling: more TV, skip brushing teeth for tonight, etc. With a routine, parents are more likely to stick to healthy expectations for everyone in the family, because that's just the way we do things in our household. The result: a family with healthy habits, where everything runs more smoothly.



Module 1

Provide predictable structure and strong routines in the home.

Routines are the schedules and procedures you follow in your home. Using them will help everyone in the family be happier and more calm—and get more done at the same time. Using good routines can help:

- eliminate power struggles.
- family members cooperate.
- children learn to take charge of their own activities.
- children learn the concept of "looking forward" to things they enjoy.
- children get on a schedule.
- parents build in important one-on-one moments with children.
- parents maintain consistency in expectations.
- parents stay consistent with expectations.