

Routines for Children

Les routines pour les enfants



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Finding a routine that works well for your family is one of the best skills that parents can learn and master during their parenting journey. Since the arrival of Covid-19 those once well established routines that so many of us have had all seemed to go out the window overnight as school and childcare centres closed and many of us found ourselves working from home.

Daily routines help our children feel safe and in control, as they provide them with an understanding of what they can expect each day. Routines help our children master the ability to transition from one activity to another, which is a skill as important as learning to print your name! For some families, the absence of routine has also been a welcomed change. The early morning wake up calls for our children who are anything but “morning people” have been put on hold, and the late night dash to the store looking for school lunch items seem like a thing of the past.

Whether you are missing your old routine or you are hoping to enhance or establish a new one, here are a few tips that hopefully make getting back to “normal” a little easier and less stressful:

- Morning Routine – Start your day at the same time every day. Make a list for children to follow after they get up and post it in the most popular starting place of the day, the bathroom. Include morning to do’s such as brush teeth, wash face, comb hair, get dressed, and have breakfast.
- Covid Home Schooling or At Home Daycare – While many of us are not returning to school morning routines for the remainder of this school year, and our daycare centres still remain closed due to provincial restrictions, continuing on with routines is important for everyone, especially parents who are now taking on the roles of teacher and full time childcare providers.

Try your best to stick with the timings that you used to follow before the social distancing and restrictions came into place. It might also be a good idea to put up an At Home School or Daycare poster in the kitchen or common family area for everyone to see, including yourself, that outlines the timeline for the day. We often see charts or posters like this in our children’s classrooms and early learning centres to help keep not only the teachers on track, but as a guide for children who may be wondering what happens next in their day.

Be creative with daily home learning activities. Because we are all still at home, adding items such as time to go for a bike ride or walk the dog instead of gym class or a trip to

the beach to learn about sea life or making a blanket tent in the livingroom to work on valuable cooperation skills are only a few ways at home learning can happen.

Remember, these outlines are only guides to help you throughout the day. One of the great things about learning from home is that learning can be creative. As parents, we have the opportunity to learn through play with our children. That may mean learning math in the kitchen while baking muffins or grabbing a magnifying glass to go exploring the creepy crawlers in our back yard or even the classic Mento's and Cola homemade volcano experiment as science.

- Mealtime Routine – Try to have meals at the same time. Talk with your child about their day. Even though we are all at home together, it is still important to talk about the activities we did. This gives both you and your child an opportunity to share with each other how you are feeling and to discuss what was the best part of your day or any parts that you would like to do differently. Some families make one night a week a special food night, like taco Tuesdays or Family Night Pizza Fridays. These special days again will help let your child know what they can expect on those days of the week.
- Naptime routine – Try to put your little one down for a nap at the same time every day. Before naptime begins, dim the lights, turn on quiet music, and stop all active play. This will give your child important clues as to what is about to happen next. Once they are asleep, use this time to catch up online with friends or get some rest yourself.
- Bedtime routine – A checklist posted in the bathroom can really help. Keeping the same bedtime hour will help ensure your child does not become overtired. One of the most popular bedtime routines is bath time, brush teeth, put on our pj's, story time with Mom or Dad, and then lights out. Don't forget to incorporate the option to say good night to grandparents, special family members, or if Mom or Dad are away from home, by using technology such as Skype, Facetime, or Zoom .

Routines and schedules are only effective if they help you, not if they cause more stress or challenges. Find what works best for you and your family. Perhaps a bedtime checklist makes the end of the day a little smoother; however, a daytime list places too much pressure on you to complete. That's ok. Remember, not everything works for everyone. As parents we want the best for our children during these uncertain times; however, many of us realised quickly we cannot, and are not expected to, replace our child's educator. There are many ways to learn creatively while at home and have fun doing it. The many restrictions and closures that we are currently experiencing won't last forever, so take time to enjoy the warmer weather with activities and a routine that will work for your family.

Your GMFRC is here to help support you through a wide variety of programs and services. If you would like more information, or resources on parenting, please our Coordinator of Child and Youth Services at [gmfrchilyouth@gmail.com](mailto:gmfrcchilyouth@gmail.com).