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Decrease Morning Stress

by Lindsey Wegner, M.A., CCC-SLP

For some parents, mornings with kids can be extremely stressful; children often run on their own clock. Rushing them out the door may only cause them to become frustrated and, therefore, slow things down even more. Some possible stress factors that contribute to a child having difficulty in the morning might include:



- Not being happy at school
- Not getting enough sleep



- Not yet having the skills to perform certain morning tasks to your expectations



- Being rushed to perform tasks that they are unable to process
- Low blood sugar that may require having breakfast before completing tasks



- Too many distractions

Parents can resolve many of these stress factors by “setting the stage” for the morning routine. Morning routines can require many tasks, some of which may occur before everyone is fully awake.

When you ask your children to perform certain tasks, do they fully understand your expectations? It is important to explain to your child what your expectations are. For example, when you ask them to get dressed, do you mean to put on a shirt, pants, shoes, and socks, or just a shirt and pants? Explain exactly what you mean and show them how to do it. Also, be aware that some children may be able to perform certain tasks but still require your help and attention in order to complete them in their entirety (tying, lacing, buttoning, etc.).

Because all children are different, some routines may work for one child and not for another. Help make mornings less stressful for you and your children by including a few of the following suggestions.



- Make a checklist of tasks that the child can check off as he/she completes them.



- Offer a small reward when they get home from school for having completed their morning tasks on time.



- Be flexible enough to create a plan that works for everyone.





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- Insist that the children complete as many tasks as possible the night before (i.e., pack school supplies, notes, homework, signed papers, field trip slips, lunch money, etc. in their book bags and place the bags by the door, pack lunches, lay out the next day's outfits, etc.)



- Limit morning use of electronics – i.e. iPod, phone, television. These are unnecessary distractions.



- Establish a certain bedtime and stick to it. The children (and you) will get a good night's sleep and be able to wake up on time feeling refreshed.

Every morning is different and some mornings may go more smoothly than others. A few of these simple ideas may help you and your kids get out the door quickly and on time – more often than not.



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