

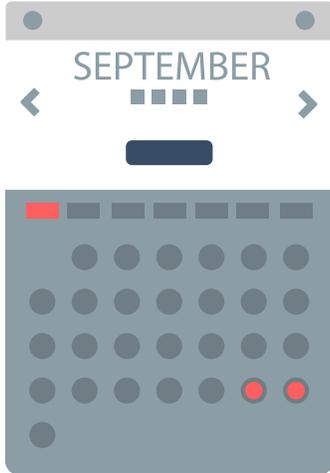


Bringing autism resources together

Creating a Daily Schedule: A Guide for Parents

Research suggests that children whose families follow a daily schedule may be healthier, better behaved, and may perform better at school. While the idea of setting up specific times for waking up, meals, chores, etc. may seem stressful, finding the right routine could help you use your time more productively. You and your family may also function better as a whole when everyone knows what's expected each day.

HOW TO SET UP A DAILY SCHEDULE



1. Decide how you want to keep track of it. You can keep the schedule in your personal calendar or planner, but if you want to engage your whole family, it may be better to write it down on paper or a dry erase board and post it somewhere visible. You can make it fun and engaging using colors or stickers.
2. Be realistic. Make sure you do not try to cram in too much at one time. Take into consideration not only what has to be done during the day, but also realistic times it takes for these tasks to be done. For example, if you know you cannot get your child to get dressed in 15 minutes, don't make that part of the schedule.
3. Consistency and predictability is key! If you want your family to follow through, you have to set a good example.
4. Start to build the schedule around the times your family members already wake up, eat, and sleep. This will help reduce the amount of change your family will need to tolerate.
5. Decide when you want things done and stick with it. For example, consider preparing in the morning the night before. If backpacks and homework are ready to go, school clothes are picked out, and lunches are made the night before, this can help there be less chaos in the morning.
6. Work together with your family members. Children as young as school age can help create a schedule. You and child could decide together on a specific bedtime routine. Giving your child some control in the process can help it run smoother each day.
7. If there is part of the schedule that is a particular challenge to a family member, consider setting up a rewards system. You can use a sticker chart or offer daily rewards to help your child complete this task and make it a part of the daily schedule.
8. Don't forget to add in any extras that don't happen daily, such as practices or school activities, certain chores, fun family activities, and one-on-one time.
9. When you first start the routine, expect some rough patches. It's not always easy to change habits and jump into a routine, so offer praise and reinforcement for following it. At the start, talking with your family through every step of the schedule can help ease into the change.
10. Make changes as needed. Don't be discouraged if your first attempt at making a daily schedule does not work. Tweak it a bit and try again.



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