

Keeping Routines During COVID-19

Families are feeling stressed, anxious and fearful about the change in our lifestyles since COVID-19 happened. This pandemic is probably the first time that most of us have ever experienced something so huge. With that being said, it is essential to keep your previous routines (before COVID) the same or very close to what routines will look like now during COVID.

To help children and yourselves cope, create a routine that fits your family's lifestyle. Have your children help you do this. It's a great feeling for them to be a part of decision making and make it fun. You'll get exceptional results when children can offer their opinions and ideas, even if they are silly. Children will build self-confidence as well.

Create a schedule of your routine so that your children can see it and follow it. Sometimes you may not be able to follow it to a "t," and that is okay. Some of your routines may take longer or shorter than anticipated. Being flexible is a good thing. Things pop up in our daily lives that need to be incorporated into our daily routine. Go with the flow.

Sample schedule of routine:

- Waking up, washing up, brushing teeth
- Make your bed, get dressed.
- Have breakfast as a family, if you can
- Learning time, whether it's a school or drop-in programs
- Have a snack, if hungry
- Take a break – go outdoors.
- Lunchtime, eat together
- Do art activities, create imaginary playtime, plan dinner
- Dinner – everyone helps
- Relax, watch a movie
- Bath, pyjamas, book and bed

This is an example of what your routine may look like. Planning and doing things together as a family helps create a sense of control. Some things you cannot control and COVID-19 is one of them. Keeping routines as healthy as possible will help to manage some stress and anxiety. Do what your family is used to.

Research has shown that routines provide comfort and a sense of safety for children. For babies and toddlers, it helps them to learn self-control. Methods will help eliminate stress, anxiety and chaos during this and any stressful time. Routines will also set children up to be successful with good habits for life.

As you go along with your day, remember we are all in the same boat. We are adjusting and adapting to the best of our abilities. Keep it as simple as possible, and encourage your children to offer suggestions and ideas. Praise your children and your partners as often as possible. Give yourself a pat on the back. You are doing a great job!

If you have some time, take a look at this video of Dr. Jean Clinton, Clinical Professor, Dept. Of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University and Ann Douglas, Parenting Book Author and Speaker called "We Got This - Part 2" - they briefly chat about routines and how it helps with predictability.

<https://youtu.be/Xlw3EfBuUIU>

Picture	Activity	Check When Complete
	Wake up at 7:30 am	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Eat breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Get dressed and brush teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Playtime or errands	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Eat lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Story time and nap	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Playtime	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Eat dinner	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Take a bath and brush teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Story time and in bed by 8 pm	<input type="checkbox"/>