

Family Activity Worksheet

House on the Rock Family Ministries

August 15, 2009

Getting kids up and ready for the day...whether it be for school, daycare, or even a sport or enrichment activity is a sure-fire stress builder and typical cause of morning madness. What can parents do to start each day in a positive fashion? Here are ten ideas.

1. Getting Kids Up: Morning Routine Must Become Way of Life

Parents unwittingly cause morning madness by not instilling that the routine is a family requirement and not an option. A non-negotiable routine must be established, and consequence discussed and determined. (i.e. If you don't get up on first call, your bedtime is 15 minutes earlier tonight). It's the "wiggly room" that causes melt-downs and tantrums on the very morning parents have a "must make" meeting.

2. Stagger Wake-Up Times

If you've got more than one kid in the house, and especially if you have a large family, consider staggering wakeup times for greater efficiency. Start with kids who need assistance first, or the ones who are real sleepyheads who move at a snail's pace come mornings.

3. Getting Kids Up: Clothing Wars Can Be Conquered With Proper Planning

Clothing, down to clean socks, underwear and shoes, and even matching hair accessories should be laid out each night before bed. Youngsters can play a role in choosing the outfit, but no changes are allowed once their head hits the pillow. And, then stick with it! The only exceptions should be an unknown tear or stain, or surprise change in the weather. This avoids missing socks, unmatched shirt and shoes, and keeps getting dressed a simple step in beginning the day vs. a looming battle.

Pebbles of Truth is a ministry of House on the Rock Family Ministries (www.hotrfm.org).

This worksheet is designed to complement the Pebbles of Truth radio feature heard on WJTL Saturday, August 15, 2009. If you missed the spot, or want to hear it again, you can listen to it on our website <http://www.pebblesoftruth.com>.

4. Getting Kids Up: Breakfast Choices Should Be Determined In Advance

One mom swears by weekly breakfast menus; other adheres to cereal and fruit. Yet another has her kids eat the \$1 breakfast at school each morning. Some daycares offer breakfast for kids; others allow parents to bring in a morning meal. Breakfast is important--some experts argue that it is the *most* important meal of the day, so your kids need a nutritious start each a.m. However, that start shouldn't put parents in a work bind or make kids late for school.

5. Only Do What's Really Important

Some parents unwittingly set their kids to fail with their morning routines by tackling on unexpected chores and duties, which causes whines and a mad rush to end up on time. Consider creating a checklist of what absolutely must be done each morning, then forget the rest. If you want your child to make his bed every morning, then make that a requirement. However, cleaning the cat box can surely wait until a child gets home.

6. Getting Kids Up: Snatch and Go Theory Really Does Work

It's just not enough to get dressed and eat. How many times have kids missed the bus because they couldn't find their homework sheet or didn't have their backpack put together? If you drive your kids, then put their organized backpacks in the car the night before. Lunches should also be prepared just before bed and easily grabbed from the fridge ready-to-go. Jackets should be in a central location. The "snatch and go" theory really does work in the mornings.

7. Getting Kids Up: Exception Mornings Should Be Planned As Well

One way to make it easier for kids to get up in the mornings is to create occasional "kids get up...NOT" day on occasion as a reward. If it's a school holiday, lazy weekend opportunity, or just about any reason at all, parents can make a special celebration out of the exception. The "not" day also serves to reinforce the lesson that normal mornings have a schedule and expectation; and that occasionally everyone gets a break from the routine.

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8. Getting Kids Up: Instill Self Responsibility

Why does a parent have to wake kids up anyway? Except for youngsters, kids can learn to awaken by an alarm clock and get themselves up without mom or dad hovering and yelling, "Are you up yet?" Let them decide what is the best time for the alarm to go off and get ready on time. If this means Erica doesn't get her hair braided or Sam doesn't get second helpings on cereal, encourage them to set their alarm 15 minutes earlier tomorrow. Cause and effect...it's a good lesson to learn!

9. Getting Kids Up: Model Morning Behavior

And, finally, parents really can help to determine whether their kids become morning risers or morning whiners. If parents moan and groan, are always frantic, grumpy and running late themselves, then how can they really expect anything more of their own kids? Good advice is to get up earlier yourself, start that coffee or do 10 minutes of exercise, and then show that Positive Mental Attitude (PMA) and really mean it when you greet your kids with "Good Morning!"

10. Designate an Essentials Area

Designate an area for all essentials that can eliminate the crazed morning syndrome when you're trying to leave. Shoes, backpacks, car keys, cell phones, purses, etc., should be placed in this area every day, always, so they are always in place and ready for action. Keep a cell phone charger in this area so your phone is charged for the day. Not having to hunt down keys or other last-minute essentials is a time and blood pressure saver, for sure!

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