

家庭的例行活動

有孩子的生活可能顯得混亂，有時甚至失控。實行一些簡單的例行活動可重新建立起秩序，幫助父母與孩子們的生活有規律。例行活動不代表嚴格的作息時間；年紀小的孩子需要有彈性的計畫（特別在週末時）。對大部分家庭而言，如果每天的活動都是按照事先預定的模式，那麼所做的計畫一般都能較妥善的實施。

規劃時間

- 有安全感 – 當每天發生的事情都有一定的先後次序，孩子們便學著預料接下來是什麼。他們覺得安全、有可靠，因為有其他人幫他們照料事情；他們不用擔心。
- 能信任 – 當關心他們的人遵守可依賴的例行動作時，孩子便學會如何去信任。這是他們在更大的世界裏建立起信任的基礎。
- 有自信心 – 如果孩子能預料接下來將發生的事，能增加他們對自己的自信心。
- 良好的習慣 – 例行動作，如經常運動，建立起良好的習慣來教導孩子如何照顧自己。

家長的益處

- 有計畫 – 有家庭慣例能幫助家長計畫，以完成必要的家事。特別是當有小嬰兒時，想找時間洗澡或購買家庭用品可能都是一項挑戰！
- 有規矩 – 當例行工作成為必行的慣例，孩子比較不會使壞來測試規矩。如果在坐下來吃飯前必須先擦乾淨玩具及洗手，大部分的孩子不會抱怨，而且會很快的將工作完成。如果洗完澡後就上床，等待著唸故事書、聽音樂、晚安吻與房門旁的微微招手，入睡就會比較容易。

有哪些是好的例行活動？

每個人都不同；沒有特別一種方法會讓例行活動適用於每個家庭。這裡有一些應考慮的因素，以及在計畫例行活動時一些應詢問自己的例子。對家長及孩子的需要與嗜好應記得列入考慮。

- 身體上的需求 – 在參與下一個活動前，每個人都吃飽了而且休息充足了嗎？每天都有時間做運動嗎（走路去公園、在客廳做熱力舞蹈）？因為這項例行活動會讓每個人都睡得充足嗎？
- 社交需求 – 剛學走路的孩子有跟其他同齡的小朋友一起玩嗎？家長有與朋友見面嗎？（遊伴

會可以符合這些需求）。

- 智慧上的需求 – 孩子們有機會玩可激發他們對環境的了解的遊戲嗎？家長與大人的世界有足夠的交流嗎？
- 情緒上的需求 – 小嬰兒有得到他們需要的安撫嗎？孩子在父母的照顧下是否有安全感？父母是否得到支持？
- 發展的階段 – 所訂的例行活動是否有照顧到隨著孩子的成長所需的不同？在急速成長的階段是否有較多的點心？是否給予剛學走路的孩子更多的選擇？（例如“你要在洗澡前或洗澡後刷牙”？給予較年長的孩子較多的責任。（例如：幫忙準備點心或學校的午餐）。
- 個別的差異 – 所訂的例行活動是否考慮到一個孩子的特定資質？例如：限制差遣任務的次數，因為這個孩子有從商店到車子等遷移上的問題。或者是給予很多彈性空間因為這個孩子的不尋常的體質，每天肚子餓的時間都不同。或者是這個孩子不喜歡受驚訝，應有一定的例行活動。

改變例行活動

有時候改變例行活動可以解決態度上的問題。

- 改變次序 – 即使有人告訴您睡前讓孩子洗澡可幫助舒緩他們，您的孩子可能會因此變得興奮而睡不著覺。如您將洗澡的時間移到晚餐前可能就會解決問題。
- 辨認需求 – 如果您的孩子總是在晚飯前使性子，那麼她很可能是肚子餓。試著在例行活動裏加上下午點心時間。或者她需要您的注意。嘗試在您開始煮飯以前與孩子玩一小段時間或，讓她在您身旁幫您剝青菜。
- 緩和的變動 – 當是時候改變例行活動時，孩子們通常會表現得不乖。例如：當剛學走路的孩子不能再繼續玩，因為哥哥的校車要到了，要去接他，您可以用最喜愛的童謠的音調唱“Johnny的校車快到了，我們要去接他”。這首歌給孩子時間調整，然後做變動。

例行活動不是石頭做的；它們因情況的改變需做適當的調整。觀察您的孩子、了解您的需要，您將能為您的家計畫出合適的、可預知的例行活動。

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Family Routines

Life with children can seem chaotic, at times even out of control. Establishing some basic routines can restore a sense of order that will make life easier for both parents and children. A routine doesn't mean a rigid schedule; young children need structure with flexibility (especially on weekends). For most families, things work better when everyday activities follow a predictable pattern.

Benefits for children

- **Sense of security** - When things happen in the same order every day, children learn to predict what comes next. They feel safe and secure because someone else is taking care of things for them; they don't have to worry.
- **Trust** - Children learn to trust when the people who care for them follow a dependable routine. This is the foundation on which they build their trust in the larger world.
- **Self-confidence** - Children's confidence in themselves also increases when they are able to predict what will come next.
- **Good habits** - Routines, such as regular exercise, build good health habits that teach children to look after themselves.

Benefits for parents

- **Planning** - Having a routine helps parents plan to accomplish necessary chores. Especially with a small baby, finding time to take a shower and buy groceries can be a challenge!
- **Discipline** - Children are less likely to test the rules by misbehaving when regular tasks become part of an established routine. If tidying up toys always comes before washing hands and sitting down to eat, most children will stop protesting and get to work fairly quickly. If bath is always followed by bed, a story, a song, a goodnight kiss and a wave from the bedroom door, sleep will come more easily.

What makes a good routine?

We are all individuals; there is no recipe for a routine that works for every family. Here are some factors to consider, along with examples of questions to ask yourself when planning a routine. Remember to take into account the needs and preferences of both parents and children.

- **Physical needs** - Is everyone fed and well rested before taking part in other activities? Is there time for physical activity (a walk to the park, energetic dancing in the living room) every day? Does the routine let everyone get enough sleep?
- **Social needs** - Are toddlers getting together with

other children their age? Are parents seeing friends? (Playgroups can answer both these needs.)

- **Intellectual needs** - Do children get time to play in ways that stimulate their understanding of their surroundings? Are parents getting enough adult conversation?
- **Emotional needs** - Are babies getting the comforting they need? Do children feel secure in their parents' attention? Are parents getting support?
- **Stage of development** - Does the routine take into account how needs change as children grow? More snacks during a growth spurt? More choices offered to toddlers? (For instance, "Will you brush your teeth before the bath or after?") More responsibilities transferred to older children. (For instance, helping to prepare snack or making a school lunch.)
- **Individual differences** - Does the routine allow for a child's particular temperament? For instance, limiting the number of errands because this child has trouble making transitions from store to car to store to car... Or lots of flexibility because this child has irregular body rhythms and isn't hungry at the same time every day. Or always the same routine because this child doesn't like surprises.

Changing the routine

Sometimes, changing the routine can solve behaviour problems.

- **Change the sequence** - Even if people tell you a bath before bed calms children, your child may get excited and have trouble going to sleep. The problem might disappear if you move bath time before supper.
- **Recognize a need** - If your child always has a tantrum before supper, maybe she's hungry. Try adding an afternoon snack to the routine. Or maybe she needs to be sure of your attention. Try a short playtime with you before you start cooking or let her shred the lettuce beside you.
- **Smooth transitions** - Children often misbehave when it is time to change activities. To avoid trouble, try adding a song to the routine to signal upcoming changes. For example, if a toddler has to stop playing to go meet an older brother's school bus, sing "Johnny's bus is coming soon, we will go to meet him," sung to the tune of "Frère Jacques." The song gives children time to adjust and make the transition.

Routines are never set in stone; they will always need to be adapted as conditions change. By observing your children, by knowing your own needs, you will be able to make a predictable routine that suits your family.

by Betsy Mann, with help from Linda Martin, Family Visitor Program Coordinator, Better Beginnings, Better Futures, Ottawa.