

## TIP SHEET FOR RELATIVES AS PARENTS

### TIPS FOR GETTING KIDS UP AND READY FOR THE DAY

Getting your kids out of bed and ready in the morning can be a struggle. Starting the day feeling rushed and chaotic can be very stressful for everyone. Here are some simple and practical tips to help lessen the stress and begin each day in a positive way. (*Adjust any of these tips to fit your child's individual needs or what will work best for your family.*)

- **Create a daily routine** – Establish a morning routine that works best for your family. Some children benefit from a step-by-step plan posted where they can see it. This plan should be individualized to fit the developmental stage and ability of each child (picture charts work well for non-readers) and each step should be assigned a time frame. For instance: Out of bed by 7:00, dressed by 7:20, breakfast by 7:30, etc. Discuss ahead of time how many reminders will be allowed and what the consequences will be for not sticking to the routine. For instance, “If you don’t get up by 7:00, you’re bedtime will be 15 minutes earlier that evening.”
- **Use a timer or an alarm** – When establishing a new routine, discuss with your child how much time she thinks she will need for each step. Each child is different and has different abilities, so some adjustments might be needed at first. If your child depends on an alarm clock to wake up by, it may be a good idea to place the alarm clock in a place where the child would have to get out of bed to shut off. If you have more than one child, you might consider staggering wake up times, starting with the child who needs the most time or assistance getting ready.
- **Plan ahead** – It is a good idea to do as much preparation as possible the evening before, leaving only the essential steps for morning. Check homework and pack backpacks the night before. Gather sports gear, snow pants, hats, mittens, or anything else your child needs and place the items by the door. If you drive your kids to school, you may want to put things in the car the night before. If your child takes lunch from home, prepare it and put it in the fridge the night before, too.
- **Minimize morning choices** – Lay out clothing and accessories the night before to make getting dressed in the morning one simple step. Let the child take part in choosing the outfit and consider not allowing any changes the next day. Breakfast foods can also be a simple choice, and again, let the child take part in planning breakfast for the following morning. Some schools offer daily breakfast at a minimum cost, which can be a great time saver for busy households.
- **Use positive motivation** – Praise your child’s cooperation each morning. A positive acknowledgement of even the most basic accomplishment can set the tone for the day, and help your child get off to school on a good note. Also, simple prompts using positive language are much more motivating than threats and warnings. For instance, “We have 15 minutes before we leave,” sets the stage for a positive outcome; as opposed to, “If you don’t hurry up we’re all going to be late again,” which sets the stage for defensiveness or a “who cares” attitude.

While we cannot expect every morning to be 100% hassle free, regular chaos and battles can become a thing of the past when we’re armed with a realistic plan of easy-to-follow steps and positive monitoring.

We have many helpful books in our lending library, where you can read more about getting organized, setting limits, establishing consequences, and remaining consistent and positive. For a full listing of books available from our library, visit [www.mainekids-kin.org/LibraryHome](http://www.mainekids-kin.org/LibraryHome) or contact Meaghan at 941-2347, 1-866-298-0896 or [mmower@familiesandchildren.org](mailto:mmower@familiesandchildren.org).

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