

School Mornings

Less Hectic

By: Kirah Meade

Making the school morning less hectic really begins the night before. Check out these tips for making your morning run smooth with less rushing, shouting, and tears; then everyone is off to school with a good feeling and a successful day.

- The very first step to making your school morning less hectic begins when your student comes through the door from a school day. Take a few minutes to go through your child's backpack or folder to sort homework and other papers from the teacher.

- Be sure homework is done that evening and not put off until the next morning. Set aside a time and a location for homework. Be accessible to your child during homework time to help if needed.

- Once homework is complete and papers are signed, pack up the backpack and put it in a designated place where it can be easily grabbed on the way out the door in the morning.

- Also the night before, wash lunchbox items and pack any items that do not require refrigeration. Refrigerated items, such as sandwiches, can be prepared the night before and stored in the refrigerator. Then in the morning simply place items in the lunchbox, add a drink, an ice pack, and you are ready to go.

- Stock up on a week's worth of lunch items - fruit, veggies, chips, bread or rolls, meats, spreads, and soups.

- Many problems in the morning result from not getting enough sleep. When children are tired and sleepy, they wake grumpy and a little disoriented. Trying to get a grumpy, sleepy child out the door is not an easy task. Adding one hour of

sleep can greatly improve your child's mood in the morning.

Nights when my daughter goes to bed early and gets more than her normal amount of sleep, she wakes up smiling and talking - completely opposite of her normal wake up behavior.

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- Decide how much sleep your child needs and set their bedtime routine according to that. Allow about a half hour

School Day Morning Checklist

- Jacket
- Backpack
- Lunchbox
- Homework
- Note to Teacher
- Project
- _____

to get ready for bed and then what ever time is needed to actually fall asleep.

- Limit evening naps, discourage caffeine, and make rules that the cell phone be left out of the room, and gaming systems/television remains off after bedtime hours.

- Set a wake up time that allows your child to fully wake up, eat a good breakfast, and get ready without rushing.

- Leave the television and games off in the morning. This will help your child stay fresh and focused for the school day.

- Make a list/chart of things your child needs to do before leaving - feed the pets, go to the bathroom, etc... It can also include a checklist for items that need to go to school with your child - backpack, lunchbox, note to the teacher, band instrument, etc... Until a checklist was incorporated in our house, I was running to the school at least twice a week to drop off things my daughter forgot.

- Set a timer for five minutes before your leave time. When the timer goes off, everyone should get into "pack up" mode - get sweater/coat on, put on backpack, get lunchbox, and be ready to walk out the door.

Morning routines don't have to be hectic. With some prep time the night before, mornings can go smooth - creating a loving and peaceful morning for all. ■