

Routines

Tips for children aged 2 to 4 years



Why have a routine?

A routine helps create a timetable for parts of the day that are difficult.

Young children like predictable, consistent routines. It helps them feel secure as they know what is happening.

What about flexibility and changes in the routine?

Things do happen but having a routine has benefits such as:

- Time for yourself when the children go to bed on time
- Having special time with your children
- Children and adults feel calmer and more settled
- You know what you're doing and when
- Helps with difficult parts of the day

How to establish a routine?

1. Consider what is the most difficult part of your day.
2. Come up with an order of events within the routine for that part of the day. Think about how long each part of the routine takes but be realistic about how long each bit takes!
3. Put this routine in a format your child will understand. So for a young child that can be using pictures or even better the real things! For example lay out the clothes you want your child to put on in the order they will put them on.
4. Explain the routine to your child in a way they will understand.
5. Praise your child for completing each stage as they do it.
6. Sometimes it helps to use a timer and always keep encouraging your child.
7. Stick to the routine for a week and get everyone in the house to encourage and praise!
8. Don't give up too soon, it takes a few goes for a child to learn a new routine.
9. When this routine is established, you can move onto another difficult part of the day.

Special days that cause a change to the routine – how do you manage that?

Birthdays, holidays, parties and people visiting can all be fun but do cause disruption to the routine your child is used to.

It helps to prepare your child so you can both enjoy special days. It may help to draw up a plan for your child and explain the plan to your child and then explain what is happening, the sequence of events and the rules whilst you are there.

"We're going to Nathan's party after lunch.

When we get there, you give Nathan the present.

There will be food for you to eat and you can play.

You must listen to me so I can look after you.

Then we will say goodbye and come home."

Changing the routine can lead to a change in a child's behaviour.

Extra planning does take up time and can seem boring, but it does help reduce nagging and reminding...