

It's never too late to establish good routines at home that will help your child feel successful.

Morning and Night Routines

- Never assume your child knows what “get ready for bed” or “get ready for school” really means.
- Some of you may have children that seem to get “lost” in the middle of getting ready – they go up to their room to get dressed but get sidetracked by something else or forget what to do next. Kids may benefit from having a checklist for the morning and nighttime routine posted that they can refer to. For smaller children, it can include pictures – you can actually take pictures of your child completing each step (ex. brushing teeth, putting on pajamas) and use that as the checklist.
- For the morning routine, make sure you include a checklist to help your child pack their backpack so that they have everything they need for school (snack, lunch, homework folder, library books, special projects).
- Have your child pack their homework the night before so there isn't a search for it in the morning. Keep the backpack in the same location as well.
- The best way to get your child to buy-in to these strategies is to have them be a part of creating them – making the checklist, deciding where to post the pictures, etc.

Homework Routines

- Set a regular time to do homework based on what works best for your child and family. Some kids do best when they get a break after school and get to play or relax while others need to sit down to complete homework right after school. Decide on the time, hopefully in collaboration with your child, and post the time on a visible schedule or calendar that should also include other commitments your child has (lessons, sports, playdates).
- Decide on a place to do homework that is ideally away from too many distractions. Ideally, the spot should be well organized and be able to house basic supplies (pencils, calculators etc) so there doesn't become a search for these items when needed. It also takes away the procrastination factor of “I need to go find a_____” Pick the spot based on whether or not your child needs a parent to be near for help or friendly reminders to stay on task. Some children are able to work independently and do well with a homework spot in their bedroom or in another quiet location.
- Set a time limit for completing homework. Talk to your child's teacher to find out what is a reasonable amount of time necessary to complete each night's work. You may want to set a timer or give your child reminders of how much time is left to help them pace themselves. Rather than engaging in a fight with your child over unfinished homework, send it in incomplete with a note to the teacher stating how long was spent on it and let the teacher work with the student to rectify it. This usually takes the battle around homework away from home and may motivate the child if he/she knows that there will be consequences from the teacher.
- Never hesitate to communicate with your child's teacher if you find your child is overly frustrated with homework or if it seems confusing or too much. If you are monitoring your child's homework, you can get a sense of if they are struggling with something in particular and can bring this up with the teacher. Reassure your child if they are not getting something that they can and should ask for help from their teacher the next day. The goal of homework is to practice and reinforce skills from school so if your child is struggling, the classroom teacher needs to know.