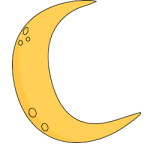




# ADHD and Routines



## Why is establishing a routine important?

- Research has shown routine is very important in managing the behaviours of children with ADHD. Well established routines can be used to make morning and night times less stressful for your child and family.
- Getting ready in the morning or getting ready for bed takes less mental energy with a routine. With a routine your child does not need to think about what they should be doing or about how best to sequence tasks:
- We understand that setting and sticking to a routine can be very challenging for a child with ADHD. Below are tips in which can help.

## Tips for Establishing Successful Routines:

- **Involve your child in making routines.** It will help him/her understand the goals of the routine and feel in control. It will also help the child become more familiar with the new routine.
- If you are having difficulties with morning routines try and **prep for the day the night before**. Make decisions about clothing and lunches for school at night to limit the number of things that need to be decided in the morning. This adds onto your evening routine, but it is worth every extra minute you have in the morning.
- **Create a “flow” in your morning or nighttime routines.** To minimize distractions between tasks, have your child complete everything they can in each room before he/she moves on to the next. For example, before he/she leaves his bedroom they should get dressed and collect any belongings they need to bring with them for the day.
- **Consider rewarding your child for following a morning or nighttime routine.** Do not give your child huge rewards for every good morning or night. Consider a reward in which is sustainable for your family (i.e. a token each day that goes towards a movie night with popcorn).
- If possible **alternate which parent/ guardian assists your child with the routine**. This will prevent one parent from consistently taking on the role as the “enforcer”. It will also give parent/guardians a rest as establishing routines can be stressful for the child and parent. Partners and guardians should use

each other as supports and recognize that setting routines can be emotionally challenging.

- **Be patient**, new routines can be difficult to establish. It can take the average neurotypical person 66 days to make a routine automatic. It may take a child with ADHD even longer. You need to **be consistent** with routines as they will not become habits if they are only completed “once in a while”.
- Children with ADHD are able to complete multi-step tasks, faster and more effectively with a **visual schedule**. You could consider making a visual schedule in which lays out morning and nighttime routines. Morning/ nighttime schedules will look different depending on your child and can include times in which the tasks should be started and/or a reward system.

### Online Visual Schedule Makers and Apps

- **Brili** : an schedule maker app with a timer and reward system  
**Website:** <https://brili.com/>
- Premade visual schedules for morning routines can be found at:  
<https://adayinourshoes.com/free-printable-visual-schedules-for-home-and-daily-routines/>
- Create your own visual schedule. Pick pictures from a picture bank and include as many steps as needed:  
<https://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/#content>