

## Mental Fitness News and Tips

### Morning routines can help ease your family's "rush hour"

In many families, "rush hour" begins before anyone even walks out the door. Simply waking up on time can be a problem. Kids may race out the door while leaving homework or school supplies behind . . . even then, they may miss the bus, be the last one to the car, or get to school late.

If this sounds familiar, it is time for you to create a new "traffic pattern" for the morning. Here are some steps to take so you can create some successful morning routines to tame the chaos:

- **Let your child take responsibility** for setting their own alarm clock.
- **Make it a game:** Try playing "Beat the Clock." If it took 35 minutes for your child to get ready for school yesterday, can they do it in 25 minutes today? Let's be honest. Some kids are late because they dawdle.
- **Prepare for the day** the night before. Set out basic breakfast foods, prepare lunches, and make sure backpacks are by the door.
- **Motivate your child** to eat breakfast. Whether it is at home or at school, students who eat breakfast do better all day long.
- **Use charts and checklists:** Create a list of all the steps involved in getting ready in the morning (brushing hair and teeth, getting dressed, making the bed, getting school supplies together). If it is Monday, do they have their signed Merit Card? If it is Tuesday, where is the library book? If it is Wednesday, does your child have her shoes for gym? Etc.

**Show your child how to deal with failure in positive ways.** Sooner or later, your child will experience failure. That is life. The way you both deal with that failure can help shape their character. Here are a few ways to help you and your youth deal positively with failure:

- **Think about the positives:** Mistakes are really opportunities for learning. What can your child learn from these experiences?
- **Praise what you can:** "Your team lost, but you made a great catch in the third inning." Be as specific with your praise as you can.
- **Be realistic:** If they are doing their best and still do not bring up a grade, praise them for the hard work—do not say you are disappointed.
- **Be a role model:** Handle your own mistakes/failures in positive ways.
- **Do not invest more** in the failure than your child does.
- **Do not argue with teachers** or coaches to try to get them to change a grade/call as this will teach your child that no decision has to be final.
- **Do not solve every problem** for your child. Let them do the work.

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### Raising your youth to be a good citizen?



The same qualities that help people live together in families can help them live in their

communities. Are you helping your child develop good citizenship? Answer *Yes* or *No* to the next questions to find out:

- \_\_\_ 1. Do you talk with your child about school and family rules as well as why they are important?
- \_\_\_ 2. Do you volunteer?
- \_\_\_ 3. Do you show your child that it is important to honor commitments by keeping your promises?
- \_\_\_ 4. Do you model good sportsmanship for your child when you are watching sporting events or playing games?
- \_\_\_ 5. Do you expect your child to be responsible for his/her actions, and be held accountable?

#### How well are you doing?

Each *Yes* answer means you are doing your best to raise a good citizen . . . in what areas could you try some new things?

Adapted from The Parent Institute®  
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