

Routines Age 12 Summary

Why Routines?

Routines help your family move through the day smoothly and on time and can significantly impact your child's/teen's success. Children/Teens ages 11-14 are either in the process of establishing critical habits or are perpetuating habits they've already established. Whether it's getting ready for school, completing their homework, or going to bed at night, these routines can have a lasting impact on a healthy future. Though 11-14-year-olds may desire more independence and flexibility with their daily routines, the structure and predictability in the morning, after school, at dinnertime, and bedtime can promote healthy habits and offer a foundation of stability during the many changes they are undergoing.

Tip These steps are done best when you and your child are not tired or in a rush.

STEP 1



Get Your Child/Teen Thinking by Getting Their Input

- Ask questions to invite your child/teen into a dialogue with you:
 - *"What do you think is helpful about having routines?"*
 - *"How does having a routine make the day go smoother?"*
 - *"What helps you remember everything you have to do? Making lists on a whiteboard? Setting alarms? Writing reminders on your mirror?"*
 - *"What do you usually do to get ready for bed?"*
- Discuss challenges. As you talk about the progression of your morning routine, talk about typically challenging times. *"Seems like getting up on time is challenging. How can we address that to make getting up easier so you can do it independently?"*
- Write your plan. Make sure your child/teen is the one who is writing down the plan or checklist. Post your plan in a visible location. Refer to it as a reminder during the morning routine. *"What's next on our plan?"*

Tip According to the National Sleep Foundation, 11-13-year-olds require between 9-11 hours of sleep per night, and 14-year-olds require between 8-10 hours per night.¹

**STEP
2****Teach New Skills**

- Consider: “If my child/teen left our house and lived away from us today, would they know how to do a load of laundry, clean up after themselves, and prepare three healthy meals daily?” Thinking about what tasks they’ll need to be able to do when they are on their own can offer you guidance on areas to step up their responsibilities. You’ll need to teach them to do those new tasks when you’ve identified those areas.
- Teach your child/teen how to perform the routine. Teachers use a simple process called interactive modeling that can become a powerful teaching tool for parents.^{^3^}
 - Say what you will model and why
 - Model the behavior
 - Ask your child/teen what they noticed
 - Invite your child/teen to model
 - Ask what they noticed with their modeling
 - Practice together
 - Provide specific feedback starting with strengths using “*I notice...*” statements

Tip Your 11-14-year-old is interested in what’s happening in the outside world and making connections, so use this motivator! Experiment with having your child/teen wait on your family table. Play it out by having them set the table, take drink orders, and serve. Or, if your child/teen is more interested in meal preparation, have them select the menu, shop for it, and actively work together on preparing and cooking it.

**STEP
3****Practice to Grow Skills and Develop Habits**

- Use “I’d love to see...” statements. *“I’d love to see you get completely organized and packed up for your school trip. Once you’re done, you can lead me through what you have prepared.”*
- Recognize effort by saying “I notice...” statements. *“I notice how you modified your checklist to make things flow more easily -- that’s taking responsibility!”*
- If part of a routine is not working, talk with your child/teen about ways to change your plan for it to work better. *“It seems to take a long time to get your things in your backpack in the morning. I usually feel rushed, and it is hard to be patient while you finish. Is there something we can do to help you get everything ready more quickly? Could we get things put into your backpack the night before? What do you think we should try tonight?”*
- Proactively remind in a gentle, non-public way: *“Remember your checklist? You’ve got it!”*

Tip The best way to turn around a misbehavior is by recognizing when and how your child/teen is making good choices or acting positively in similar circumstances. They need to learn what to do and what not to do.

**STEP
4****Support Your Child's/Teen's
Development and Success**

- Ask key questions:
 - *"Are you all set with what you need to get your project together?"*
 - *"Do you need any help finishing up so we can move toward our agreed bedtime?"*
- Recognize effort using "I notice" statements like, *"I notice how you started your homework right after school without me asking. That's taking responsibility!"*
- Reflect on outcomes. *"It seems like you got to bed later than we hoped last night. What did you notice about how it impacted your mood or attention in class?"*
- Apply logical consequences when needed. Logical consequences should come soon after the negative behavior and need to be provided in a way that maintains a healthy relationship. Rather than punishment, a consequence is about supporting the learning process. First, recognize your feelings and practice a calm down strategy. Not only is this good modeling, but when you control your emotions and feel calm, you can provide logical consequences that fit the behavior. Second, invite your child/teen to discuss the expectations established in Step 2 for the routine. Third, if you feel that your child/teen is not keeping to the agreement that was made (unless it is a matter of them not knowing how), then look for a logical consequence that has or will naturally occur to reflect on, such as a sibling's hurt feelings over mean words. Then, as you reflect, you might ask, *"How can you heal your sister's hurt feelings?"* Your child/teen can think through what they might do or say to repair harm. Or you might apply a logical consequence as a teachable moment. One example of a logical consequence during a morning routine that's gone awry might be to encourage your child/teen to apologize to their teacher for being late for school and make a plan to begin your morning routine earlier the next day.
- Stay engaged. Be sure to pose the challenge as a question and allow them to offer solutions.
- Engage in further practice. Create more opportunities to practice when the family has time together.

Trap Logical consequences should not be used as a threat to get your child to complete their routines. Threats harm the relationship with your child and decrease your child's decision-making skills.

**STEP
5****Recognize Efforts**

- No matter how old your child/teen is, your positive reinforcement and encouragement have a significant impact.
- You can reinforce your child's/teen's efforts in many ways. It is important to distinguish between three types of reinforcement – recognition, rewards, and bribes. These three parenting behaviors impact your child's/teen's behavior differently.
 - **Recognize** even small successes to promote positive behaviors and expand confidence: *"You set out your clothes and backpack last night, so you were not*

rushed this morning. I appreciate that!" Recognition can include nonverbal acknowledgment such as a smile, high five, or hug.

- **Rewards** can be helpful in certain situations by providing a concrete, timely, and positive incentive for doing a good job. A reward is determined ahead of time so that the child/teen knows what to expect, like "*If you complete your homework routine before dinner, you can spend time gaming with your friends*" (if you XX, then I'll XX). The goal should be to help your child/teen progress to a time when the reward will no longer be needed. Rewards can decrease a child's/teen's intrinsic motivation if used too often.
- Unlike a reward, **bribes** aren't planned ahead of time and generally happen when a parent is in the middle of a crisis (like a child/teen arguing and refusing to leave a social gathering. To avoid disaster, a parent offers to stop for ice cream on the way home if the child/teen will stop arguing and leave the event). While bribes can be helpful in the short term to manage stressful situations, they will not grow lasting motivation or behavior change and should be avoided.
- Build celebrations into your routine. For example, snuggle together after a smooth bedtime routine and listen to relaxing music. Or, in the morning, once ready for school, leave a special note of gratitude in their lunchbox.

Tip 11-14-year-olds are trying to define their identity as an independent person. Comments that point out how they are acting in self-sufficient ways will help them see how contributing to your daily family life is also helping them achieve their personal goals.

1. Wilson, M.B. (2012). *Interactive modeling; A powerful technique for teaching children*. Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children.

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