

# Daily Routine Ideas

Use these suggestions to create strong daily habits for you and your child. By creating a daily routine, you can use different parts of your day as learning opportunities and provide structure for your family. WXXI Education collaborated with Dr. Elizabeth Murray from University of Rochester Medical Center to create this list of ideas.

Rise and Shine		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wake up.</li> <li>Get out of bed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good morning! How did you sleep last night?</li> <li>Did you have any dreams?</li> <li>Today is <u>(insert day of the week)</u>. It is <u>(insert month)</u> and the year is 2020.</li> <li>Today we need to... <u>(clean the kitchen, do some laundry, practice counting, read a story, vacuum...)</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember, any conversation you have with your child is helping their brain to grow so it's a good thing to have lots of conversations with your child!</li> <li>Helping prepare children for the day ahead, gives them something to look forward to and to rely on.</li> </ul>

Breakfast		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands.</li> <li>Eat breakfast together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe everything your child is doing.</li> <li>I'm taking a bite of my toast and the food is going in my mouth. Can you take a bite of your toast too? We can do it together.</li> <li>What are you eating?</li> <li>Do you like <u>(insert breakfast food)</u>?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many people are feeling very off with all the changes in our lives. It's important to try to have regular meals at regular meal times. It's tempting to offer a lot of treats as a way to encourage cooperation, but younger children won't understand that things are <i>temporarily</i> different so when things go back to normal, they will still expect a lot of treats.</li> </ul>

Get Ready		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands.</li> <li>Brush teeth.</li> <li>Change clothes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let sing the ABCs while we wash our hands! It helps us make sure we're getting our hands super clean.</li> <li>I'll sing Twinkle Twinkle while you brush your teeth! It will help you make sure you're brushing long enough.</li> <li>Here, you can wear the blue shirt or the red shirt, you get to choose.</li> <li>There are blue socks and white socks – which do you want to wear?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage children to wash their hands before eating, when messes occur, and after eating.</li> <li>Brushing teeth is important, even if no toothpaste is available, water on the brush is still helpful.</li> <li>Take advantage of the extra time and let your child take as long as they need to get themselves dressed.</li> <li>Young children are so excited to do things themselves but they will often get frustrated. Providing choices lets your child feel a little more in control and more like a "big kid".</li> </ul>

Play		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a fort.</li> <li>• Make an obstacle course.</li> <li>• Do a shape hunt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a blanket and cover a table or a few chairs. Then bring in a toy or two. Let's pretend we're camping in our fort! Where are we camping? (On the moon? A forest? In a park? At the beach?)</li> <li>• Set up chairs or put pillows on the floor in a pattern that your child can run around. Count as they run. Wow! You are so fast! Let's try it again. I'll keep counting. Next time I'll try the course!</li> <li>• Can you find something that looks like a triangle? Do you see two squares?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is rare for a toddler or younger child to be able to sit for a long time, they will do better if they have time to move.</li> <li>• Sometimes bad behavior can be improved when a child is encouraged to run or play. Going outside is still ok if you have a safe place for your child to play.</li> </ul>

Work Time		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a small work space for your child where they can do some learning activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's use this deck of cards to find some (<u>insert one of these: numbers, shapes, colors</u>).</li> <li>• Should we try (<u>stacking or counting</u>) the cards?</li> <li>• Let's try tracing over (<u>shapes or pictures</u>) from this magazine.</li> <li>• Let's draw a picture of what we see out the window!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of having work to do can be very interesting for children. Use a coffee table or even a turned over sturdy box as pretend desk.</li> <li>• Children may just sit/stand by the table and that's ok.</li> <li>• Helping young children learn to use their hands well is important for their overall development.</li> </ul>

Outside Time		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a walk.</li> <li>• Run around.</li> <li>• Draw with chalk.</li> <li>• Collect objects.</li> <li>• Look for letters on signs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's see how many (<u>squirrels, trees, birds</u>) we can find outside?</li> <li>• Look at the clouds. Do you see any pictures or animals in the clouds? I think I see a unicorn!</li> <li>• Let's pretend we're Nature Cat and see what we observe in the dirt!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running, climbing, breathing fresh air is important to little bodies. Taking a walk or playing in the yard are good options too.</li> <li>• Use words like "exploring", "observing", "investigating" to help young children feel like they are in scientist mode.</li> </ul>

Snack		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands.</li> <li>Eat snack.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes when I'm hungry I feel a little grouchy!</li> <li>I'm going to have a snack, would you like one?</li> <li>Should we have a cheese stick or a banana?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some children get really fussy or frustrated easily if they are hungry. Snacks should be simple and try to limit their drinks to water.</li> <li>A good goal is water to drink with snacks, milk with meals. Keep drink cups on a table, in one spot, that he/she can reach when she needs a drink (that way they don't have to ask you to get the cup).</li> </ul>

Lunch		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands.</li> <li>Eat lunch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remind your child about the day so far. This morning we got up, got dressed, and had breakfast.</li> <li>It's the middle of the day now and I'm feeling hungry. Are you hungry? Let's have lunch.</li> <li>Prepare your child for what will happen after lunch. This afternoon we're going to have some quiet time and some time to play outside!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to have two types of food with lunch. For example, a sandwich and some fruit, or yogurt and fruit, or applesauce and peanut butter on crackers.</li> </ul>

Nap/Quiet Time		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nap or lay down for rest time.</li> <li>Stack paper or plastic cups.</li> <li>Coloring.</li> <li>Look at books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We're all going to take some quiet time now. That means no screens because we're letting our brains rest. If you feel sleepy you can fall asleep or you can do (<u>insert quiet time idea</u>).</li> <li>You can build with these cups. Can you build something really tall?</li> <li>You can make your own coloring sheet by drawing or tracing from books. I can help you!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's pretty normal for children to slow down a little after lunch. Now is a good time for them to play on their own, with you nearby. Having simple choices available to them, in a place where they can reach, will help encourage playing alone.</li> <li>If your child still naps, try your best to use some of the time to allow yourself to rest. You are doing your best in a very hard situation. Please take care of yourself.</li> </ul>

Dinner Time		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tear lettuce.</li> <li>• Stir/mix items together.</li> <li>• Help put napkins on the table.</li> <li>• Throw paper towel or napkin away.</li> <li>• Help wipe off table.</li> <li>• Wash hands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you like to stir this with me?</li> <li>• You can touch this because it's sharp, but you can rip up this lettuce for me.</li> <li>• Thank you for helping me get dinner ready.</li> <li>• I'm glad you are helping me by putting your napkin in the trash.</li> <li>• What did you eat for dinner?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even if your child is too young to help getting dinner ready, you can make them feel included by having them sit at a table in the kitchen with you or on a step stool next to you by the counter where you are doing the preparation.</li> <li>• Little kids probably can't carry dishes but expecting them to throw out a napkin or paper towel after meals is a good start. When your child is helping, let them know they are helping.</li> </ul>

Post-Dinner Time		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch a favorite show or movie together.</li> <li>• Color or draw.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember when Elmo was really frustrated, what did he do to calm down? Can you take a deep breath like Elmo did?"</li> <li>• <i>Use these <a href="#">PBS KIDS Conversation Cards</a> for ideas of what to talk about.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After dinner can be really tough. Chances are your child won't be ready for bed right after dinner and chances are you are really tired by this point in your day.</li> <li>• Watching a show with your child lets you know what they are seeing and lets you talk more about it with them when the show is off. You can often use examples from TV shows in your real life.</li> </ul>

Bed Time		
What to Do:	What to Say:	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush teeth</li> <li>• Put on pajamas</li> <li>• Bath</li> <li>• Read or look at a book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the day. What is something that made you <u>(insert feeling)</u> today?</li> <li>• Can you remember what you drew during quiet time?</li> <li>• What animals did the Wild Kratts learn about today on the creature trail?</li> <li>• Do you remember what song we sang when we were brushing our teeth?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a consistent routine will help your child calm down and be ready to sleep.</li> <li>• Their brains need a break from any screen time before bed and having a routine that takes 20 minutes or so will help them be able to quiet and "come down" from any screen time.</li> </ul>

## A few additional tips/things to remember for grownups:

### Grownup Break Time

- Being home all day with young children when you are used to them being in school or daycare can be really hard. Make sure you are giving yourself a break too.
- If you feel yourself losing your temper, put your child in their crib or a safe spot and walk away to another room or the yard for a minute or two. It sounds silly, but taking three deep breaths can help to make you feel a lot better and helps you to refocus how you are feeling. It's ok to feel mad or sad or completely frustrated with the current situation, but you need to control your response to your child.
- Try asking yourself what is bothering you. Is it that your child isn't listening to your instructions? Did your child just make a huge mess after you cleaned up? Did they spill food thereby wasting it? All of these things are really frustrating but usually out of the actual control of a young child. Figuring out the root of what makes you feel so frustrated will help you to fix it.
- Text/call/video chat with a friend. Adults need to maintain their friendships too and reaching out to a friend to talk about your day can be a big support and a nice distraction.

### Potty Time

- If your child was in the process of toilet training before isolation started, you have probably noticed they have taken a few steps back.
- It is normal for big changes to cause trouble with toilet training. This is incredibly frustrating, but normal. Your child will eventually learn to use the toilet. Creating a routine when your child uses the bathroom at certain times every day can be helpful. It's best to pick times when your child is most likely to have success (a little while after a meal or a snack). Also watch your child's activity. If they seem uncomfortable or wiggly, they might need to go.
- It can be helpful for children to hear that things like using the toilet or brushing their teeth is part of the job of taking care of their body. "As your mom, my job is to help keep you safe and healthy. You need to brush your teeth to help keep your body health. It's important so we are going to do it."