



CREATE AND INTRODUCE ROUTINES AT HOME

These last few weeks and months have been a time of transition but they can also be difficult for some children and parents. A consistent routine at home can help children, particularly young children, ease into their new norm while learning important life skills. That's because routines bring structure that is crucial for your child's cognitive development, independence, social skills and success.

Benefits of routines for children

Children thrive and prosper when they know what is going to happen and when. Structure and routine help children feel secure and comfortable while fostering a sense of independence and responsibility. Routines also guide a child's developing brain to know how to organize and manage daily activities. Children can better understand time and create healthy lifetime habits, such as brushing teeth and waking up on time, when routines are in place. Research tells us that children learn best when we embed learning activities into their regular routines because they are repetitive and predictable and give children many opportunities to practise their skills.

Be consistent

Children do best when routines are regular, predictable and consistent. You can create well-planned routines by identifying important times during this period that would benefit from having a routine and starting these routines early.

Get a good night's sleep

We all know that a good day starts with a good night's sleep. To be as healthy as possible, children need adequate night sleep. A consistent bedtime and enough sleep are very important for healthy brain development and can help with children's physical health and emotional well-being.

The Public Health Agency of Canada's current *guidelines* recommend:

- Nine to 11 hours of sleep/night for children aged five to 13
- Eight to 10 hours of sleep/night for children aged 14 to 17



Setting a healthy bedtime routine includes adjusting wake up and meal times at home to match the school day, going to sleep at the same time every night, putting an end to screen time at least an hour before bedtime and creating a relaxing wind-down routine, such as a bath or reading a book.

If you need support with setting routines for mealtime, bedtime, independent play and more or need guidance on parenting strategies, please connect with:

- A York Region EarlyON Community Program Coordinator by sending an email to EarlyON@york.ca. This support is provided through York Region Early Intervention Services and agencies providing EarlyON child and family programs and services in York Region.
- Expectant and new parents can also access a registered nurse via [online chat](#) or by telephone at 1-800-361-5653 Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Read the [positive discipline tips](#) for more information on what parents can do to support their children regarding sharing, temper tantrums, childhood fears and others.

