

Creating a Routine During the “Coronavirus Vacation”

With the long days home during the coronavirus crisis, challenging behavior may arise. Using a set routine can make it easier to get through this period, and provide your children with a sense of order and security.



Forced and Unplanned Vacation: The Challenge

The forced time off from school, which is a result of the attempt to stop the coronavirus from spreading, can be a very challenging experience for both parents and children. We're forced to deal with long hours at home, stress from the news and a change in our routine and our children's routines.

With the long vacation days, challenging behavior may arise. Using a set routine can help you get through this period, and provide your children with a sense of order and security.

Why does having a routine help manage behavior?

A routine helps family members know who does what, when, in what order and how often. Also, it helps lessen inappropriate behavior that has to do with boring tasks like teeth brushing, collecting toys or when the TV is turned off.

A game routine, a meal time routine and a sleep routine can be created for young children. Kids that receive satisfying and quality sleep, nutritious food and a lot of play time, usually behave the way you want them to behave.

A routine helps kids feel safe and protected- just what they need in complicated and stressful times like these.

Creating a Routine

Here are a few tips that can help you create a routine during this time:

- If your child is old enough - around school age - you can talk to them about the desired routine. Having a discussion about the different routines is a great way to help them learn important things, like how to keep themselves busy, make sure to complete school tasks and more.
- Plan a routine for especially challenging times during the day - each family according to its own stressful hours. In a routine where everyone has something to do, or at least one that allows the children to be busy while you take care of other things or younger children, can help everything run more smoothly.
- Add rest time to your children's routine. This way they can spend time sleeping or resting, which will help their behavior and allow them to learn how to keep themselves busy.
- Integrate a variety of activities into the routine: meal preparations, learning, reading a book, screen time, playing together, running around the yard, cleaning up the house and more.
- You can include limits for certain activities in the routine, like limited screen time. For example, kids can only watch TV or use their tablet between 17:00 and 18:30 (or whatever works for your family).

Inspiring Your Children to Keep the Routine

You've made a plan that will be the center of your new routine. So how can you make your children live by it, without nudging them? Here are a few ideas:

- Make a poster with drawings of the routine and hang it in a prominent place. Making the poster can be a fun activity for you and the kids, and it can provide you with time to talk about the desired routine.
- Tell your children about the parts in their routine that they can manage on their own. For example, choosing a game or a program to watch on TV, cleaning up their room and more.
- Find ways to remind your children to act according to the routine without your help. For example, put an alarm clock in their room. The ring will indicate to them that it's time to move from one activity to the next.
- Think about which parts of the routine can be your children's responsibility. This can be a great time to learn new skills and help the family with tasks around the house. For example, a kindergarten-aged child can set the table before meals.
-
- Pay attention to your children and praise them when they follow the routine without any help.

Remember that the routine doesn't have to force your family to be rigid and inflexible. Last minute changes and surprises are a natural part of life, especially in unpredictable times like these.

© raisingchildren.net.au, The information was translated and edited with the consent of the Raising Children Network website.