

# Morning Madness Tips for Getting Kids Up and Ready

By Robin McClure

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Getting kids up and ready for the day...whether it be for school, daycare, or even a sport or enrichment activity is a sure-fire stress builder and typical cause of morning madness. What can parents do to start each day in a positive fashion? Here are seven ideas.

## 1 Getting Kids Up: Morning Routine Must Become Way of Life



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Parents unwittingly cause morning madness by not instilling that the routine is a family requirement and not an option. A non-negotiable routine must be established, and consequence discussed and determined. (i.e. If you don't get up on the first call, your bedtime is 15 minutes earlier tonight). It's the "wobble room" that causes meltdowns and tantrums on the very morning parents have a "must make" meeting.

## 2 Stagger Wake-Up Times

If you've got more than one kid in the house, and especially if you have a large family, consider staggering wake-up times for greater efficiency. Start with kids who need assistance first, or the ones who are real sleepyheads who move at a snail's pace come mornings.

## 3 Getting Kids Up: Clothing Wars Can Be Conquered With Proper Planning

Clothing, down to clean socks, underwear and shoes, and even matching hair accessories should be laid out each night before bed. Youngsters can play a role in choosing the outfit, but no changes are allowed once their head hits the pillow. And, then stick with it! The only exceptions should be an unknown tear or stain, or surprise change in the weather. This avoids missing socks, unmatched shirt, and shoes, and keeps getting dressed a simple step in beginning the day vs. a looming battle.

## 4 Getting Kids Up: Breakfast Choices Should Be Determined In Advance

One mom swears by weekly breakfast menus; another adheres to cereal and fruit. Yet another has her kids eat the \$1 breakfast at school each morning. Some daycares offer breakfast for kids; others allow parents to bring in a morning meal. Breakfast is important--some experts argue that it is the *most* important meal of the day, so your kids need a nutritious start each a.m. However, that start shouldn't put parents in a work bind or make kids late for school.

## 5 Only Do What's Really Important

Some parents unwittingly set their kids up to fail with their morning routines by taking on unexpected chores and duties, which causes whining and a mad rush to end up on time. Consider creating a checklist of what absolutely must be done each morning, then forget the rest. If you want your child to make his bed every morning, then make that a requirement. However, cleaning the cat box can surely wait until a child gets home.

## 6 Getting Kids Up: Snatch and Go Theory Really Does Work

It's just not enough to get dressed and eat. How many times have kids missed the bus because they couldn't find their homework sheet or didn't have their backpack put together? If you drive your kids, then put their organized backpacks in the car the night before. Lunches should also be prepared just before bed and easily grabbed from the fridge ready-to-go. Jackets should be in a central location. The "snatch and go" theory really does work in the mornings.

## 7 Getting Kids Up: Exception Mornings Should Be Planned As Well

One way to make it easier for kids to get up in the mornings is to create the occasional "Kids get up...NOT!" day as a reward. If it's a school holiday, lazy weekend opportunity, or just about any reason at all, parents can make a special celebration out of the exception. The "not" day also serves to reinforce the lesson that normal mornings have a schedule and expectation, and that occasionally everyone gets a break from the routine.

## 8 Getting Kids Up: Instill Self Responsibility

Why does a parent have to wake kids up anyway? Except for youngsters, kids can learn to use an alarm clock and get themselves up without mom or dad hovering and yelling, "Are you up yet?" Let them decide what is the best time for the alarm to go off and get ready on time. If this means Erica doesn't get her hair braided or Sam doesn't get second helpings on cereal, encourage them to set their alarm 15 minutes earlier tomorrow. Cause and effect...it's a good lesson to learn!

## 9 Getting Kids Up: Model Morning Behavior

And, finally, parents really can help to determine whether their kids become morning risers or morning whiners. If parents moan and groan, are always frantic, grumpy, and running late themselves, then how can they really expect anything more of their own kids? Good advice is to get up earlier yourself, start that coffee or do 10 minutes of exercise, and then show that Positive Mental Attitude (PMA) and really mean it when you greet your kids with "Good Morning!"

## 10 Designate an Essentials Area

Designate an area for all essentials that can eliminate the crazed morning syndrome when you're trying to leave. Shoes, backpacks, car keys, cell phones, purses, etc., should be placed in this area every day, always, so they are always in place and ready for action. Keep a cell phone charger in this area so your phone is charged for the day. Not having to hunt down keys or other last-minute essentials is a time and blood pressure saver, for sure!

# 6 Ideas That Will Make Your Kids Want to Get Ready in the Morning

**Make the morning routine more fun and get everyone out the door on time**



By [Jill Ceder, LMSW, JD](#)

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Do you dread getting your kids out the door in the morning? Are your weekday mornings filled with kids throwing clothes, refusing to eat and begging to watch tv? Don't worry...you are not alone!

Getting your children out the door in the morning can be a major challenge for parents. By 8 am, parents are left feeling stressed, tired and angry. Sticking to a routine and [prepping the night](#) before can save a lot of time and stress, but for many parents, it is impossible to get out the door without nagging and yelling.

Here are six ideas that will make getting ready in the morning a more positive experience and will also get everyone out the door on time.

1. **Music Playlist.** Create a playlist of your child's favorite songs. Every task (use the bathroom, get dressed, eat breakfast) is connected to one song and must be completed by the time the song is over. Your kids will happily sing along; just make sure they don't get distracted having a dance party.

2. **Checklist.** Sit with your child and create a [checklist of morning activities](#). Include your child in the creation of the list. Allowing her to participate will show her that her opinion is important and also help her understand what is expected of her in the morning. Many children respond to checklists because they can see what they need to do and feel in control of the situation. Children will feel empowered when they can check off each item in their morning routine.

3. **Make Believe.** Some children respond to seeing the morning routine played out with stuffed animals. On the weekend or the night before, act out the morning routine with a parent and child stuffed animal. Play out the scenario with you as the parent and then switch and allow your child to be the parent.

You can add some humor to the scenarios. Some children need to act out situations through dolls in order to work out their feelings.

4. **Beat the Timer.** Some kids respond very well to timed situations. Make a game out of racing around the house to get ready and challenge your child to beat the timer in his morning tasks. If you have more than one child, they can race against each other. Fastest score wins!

5. **Dress Up.** For the fashionista child, let her play dress up the night before and choose her outfit. Put any clothing you don't want her wearing to school in a different area than the school clothes. This way she doesn't spot her favorite Frozen dress in the morning, put it on and refuse to go to school in anything else.

6. **Rewards.** Kids respond to rewards and positive reinforcement. Tell them if they get ready by a certain time with no fights, they will be rewarded on the way to school or a surprise reward will be placed in their lunchbox. If they do not comply, they are not rewarded.

Getting your kids ready in the morning does not have to be a [chore](#) or a reason for tears. Make the morning routine a fun [experience](#) for your kids and start the day with smiles.