



Back-to-School for Families and Students Toolkit | *Tip sheet*

Mastering Your Family Routine

Creating a steady family routine can be hard, but it is one of the best ways to support your family's mental health and daily happiness. Research shows that families with regular routines feel more stable, less stressed and more connected. Children in homes with predictable routines also show stronger social and emotional skills.

Mornings can be the toughest. One study found that the average family spends about 77 minutes getting out the door, even when things go well. Planning the night before can make mornings easier. Set out clothes, pack lunches and look over the next day's schedule to help things run smoothly.

Here are some tips to build a back-to-school routine that works for your family:

Start early

Do not wait until the night before school starts. Begin adjusting bedtimes and wake-up times about two weeks ahead. Shift the schedule by 15 minutes each day. This helps your child's internal clock adjust without stress.

Assign family roles

A routine works best when everyone knows what to do. Kids can help with simple tasks like setting the table, walking the dog or putting away dishes. When families share responsibilities, they often feel less stressed and work together better.

Plan for extracurriculars

School activities can quickly fill your evenings. Sit down as a family each week to review the schedule. Set limits on how many days per week your child can stay after school. This ensures you all have time to rest and recharge.

Focus on nutrition

Family meals matter. Eating dinner together, even a few nights a week, helps kids feel secure and gives you a chance to connect. Keep breakfast simple but healthy. Include protein, fruit and fiber to give your child energy for the day.

Mastering your family routine is not about being perfect. It is about creating a rhythm that supports your family, helps reduce stress and gives you more time to connect with each other.

#BackToSchool #StudentMentalHealth

If you or your kids need help with mental health at school, you can contact the [National Alliance for Mental Illness](#) by calling 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or text NAMI to 62640.

Reviewed by Medical Director, Doctor of Medicine and Director of Clinical Operations.