

Morning routine



Let's face it, mornings can be hard. Often, time is limited and there are many tasks to be done. There may even be conflicting goals, with children wanting to stay at home, and the parents/carers aiming to be out the door on time.

Even when a morning routine has been established, this can be quickly derailed, and getting out the door seems like mission impossible. It may be helpful to note that such moments teach children to be flexible, and develop an understanding that things don't always go to plan.

Supporting young children to be actively involved in the morning routine promotes their sense of autonomy, and is key to its success. Where a consistent morning routine is in place, parents/carers are better placed to promote enriching connections with young children, as well as set a positive tone for the day ahead.

Getting started

Before establishing a morning routine, take time to explore this with your child outside of the routine. By doing so, you will both be better placed to actively contribute while feeling less overwhelmed. For example, on Monday Tom attends his playgroup at the local school. On Sunday evening his parents take the time to explore this with him by communicating, "tomorrow is playgroup. In the morning we need to get up, get dressed, and go to playgroup. In the morning we will wake you up, then you can eat breakfast and we can get dressed." By discussing the day ahead, your child(ren) may be better prepared for what is expected of them – when children are prepared, they are better placed to be actively involved.

Other ideas may include:

- Showing your child a picture of where they will be going the following day. For example, a picture of the preschool or playgroup.
- Viewing videos of other children attending similar groups and exploring their experience, for example, "Look, Tom is at playgroup. He is playing with the toys and having fun."
- Social stories are a great tool for supporting children with developing new ideas and understanding of routines. If this is something you would like to explore further, please consult your Start Strong Pathways educator or Speech Therapist.
- Visiting the venue ahead of time – this may include looking at the venue from the exterior. For example, "Look Sophie, this is your new preschool, we will be going here tomorrow."



- A visual calendar may further assist children with developing an understanding of their week ahead. For example:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				
Preschool	Preschool	Park	Playgroup	Home

- A visual routine schedule may also further assist children in developing an understanding of what is expected during the morning routine.

Wake up 	Go to toilet/ change nappy 	Eat breakfast 	Wash face 	Get dressed 	Pack bag 	Leave house 
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Set the tone

Often our mornings set the foundation for our mood and the way we go about our day. Young children strive to feel a sense of connection and belonging to the world around them. Parents/carers can support children to feel connected to those around them and promote a positive start to their day by greeting them with a good morning or offering a hug. You may also like to consider singing a good morning song. You can access a range of songs to sing along to online. Some examples may include:

- [Good morning Song for Kids by The Singing Walrus](#)
- [Have a good morning, have a good day BY Jack Hartmann](#)
- [Good morning song for Kids by Maple Leaf Learning](#)

Helpful tips

- Encourage your child to sing along. Remember this may look different for each child and it is important to acknowledge their strengths and attempts to join in. This may include clapping along, the use of natural gestures, signs, or moving along to the music.
- Children do not need to view the iPad to join in – you may like to consider reducing exposure to screen time by having the iPad out of view and immediate access (simply have it playing in the background).
- Be present and get involved, sing along with your child, or model the various actions.
- Some children may prefer softer, soothing music. Consider your child's interests and taste and how this can be used to support their engagement. For example, does your child have a favourite song they may like to sing along to? It does not have to be a good morning song.
- You may also like to consider singing as a tool for encouraging your child to get dressed, brush their teeth, and prepare for the day.

During the morning routine

Consider opportunities for your child(ren) to actively contribute to preparation for the day. Such opportunities further promote a sense of autonomy, belonging and empower young children to be active and involved learners. Some examples may include:

- Is there an opportunity for your child to help prepare breakfast? Again, it is important to acknowledge that time is often limited, and this may look different for each child and family. As a parent/carer you may like to be responsible for what is on offer however, you may like to support your child to pour their cereal into the bowl or spread jam on their toast (using age-appropriate cutlery).
- Is there an opportunity for your child to contribute to cleaning and packing away breakfast? For example, your child could help to wipe the table or even wash their bowl. This will further develop their self-help and fine motor skills.
- Does your child have a favourite shirt he/she may like to select to wear for the day? Helpful tip: picking out clothing in the evening further minimises time spent in the morning.
- Would your child benefit from access to an alarm or similar to indicate when a task is complete or it's time to leave the house? Is there an opportunity for your child to take ownership of this task?
- Keep things fun – You may like to play a game where children are encouraged to complete a task prior to the buzzer. For more information on this game, [‘Beat the buzzer’: Morning routine game – Raising Children Network](#)
- Consider opportunities for older children to be positive role models for younger siblings.
- Consider the use of a reward chart to celebrate and acknowledge completed tasks. For each finished task a child is rewarded with a gold star or similar. Over time, children may work towards a larger reward, for example, a trip to the park or a small prize.

Tom's Reward Chart

Resource

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Activity Wake up 	★				
Go to the toilet 	★				
Eat Breakfast 	★				
Get Dressed 	★				
Pack bag 	★				
Leave house 	★				
I am working towards....	A visit to the park on Saturday 				

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When it is time to leave:

- Would it be helpful for your child to be given some notice prior to leaving the house? You may like to consider giving your child a prompt, “in ten minutes, we have to leave.” For some children, it may be helpful to be given multiple reminders.
- For children who have a preference for visual learning, you may like to consider using a combination of verbal cues and visual prompts such as showing a child their shoes to communicate it is time to leave. A timer may also support your child during this transition.
- Consider how you may like to support your child to be a part of this transition. For some children, it may be helpful to have an item of interest when leaving the house, this may be a favourite toy or book. As a parent/carer you may like to prompt your child, “We are leaving in five minutes, would you like to get your favourite book?”



- Singing is a great tool to motivate children during transition times, and when encouraging children to leave the house. You may like to sing along to the tune of your child’s favourite song, or for those who are CoComelon fans, sing along to the song “[Time to Go](#).” Remembering your child does not need to view the iPad or device, simply sing along together. Another example may be:

Sung to the tune of “Wheels on the bus.”

*This is the way we go to preschool.
This is the way we go to preschool.
This is the way we go to preschool
early in the morning.*

*This is the way we pack our bag.
This is the way we pack our bag.
This is the way we pack on bag
early in the morning.*

*This is the way we put on our shoes.
This is the way we put on our shoes.
This is the way we put on our shoes
early in the morning.*

*This is the way we go to preschool.
This is the way we go to preschool.
This is the way we go to preschool
early in the morning.*



Once you have left the house

Now you have left the house, it is important that your child's efforts are acknowledged and celebrated. By doing so, children will feel empowered and motivated. You may like to provide your child(ren) with feedback such as, "Good job at getting ready today." You may also like to refer to *The In Car Routine from Series 1* for more tips on making the car routine fun.

It may be helpful for parents/carers to consider what task may be completed ahead of time, for example:

- Showering in the evening can significantly reduce the time spent getting ready in the morning. While it is often great to have a refreshing shower in the morning, this can be challenging in itself, and showering at night gives parents/carers more time to connect with their children in the morning.
- Creating a bag station is a great tool to ensure all items for the day are prepared and quickly and easily located. Such an approach also enables young children to begin to recognise their personal possessions and provides them with an opportunity to actively contribute to getting ready.
- Pack any meals for the day the night before. Placing items that do not require refrigeration directly into the child's bag further reduces the time spent getting ready in the morning.
- Getting up before your child, even if it is only a few minutes earlier, provides parents/carers with a few moments to get dressed and take a moment to prepare for the day.
- Creating an accessible teeth brushing station can help to minimise time spent moving between tasks.

Note: For some families, the bedtime routine will be the best place to start. Sleep plays a vital role in our emotional well-being and can have a big impact on how we go about our days. If your child's sleep schedule has been disrupted, this may be a good place to start. A well-rested child will be much more amenable to other kinds of routines. Please refer to the *Bedtime resources released in suite 1 of the Family Resource Series* or consult your *Start Strong Pathways educator* for further information.

Further resources

[Morning routine for school: Tips – Raising Children Network](#)

[Starting Preschool: Practical Tips – Raising Children Network](#)

[Getting ready for preschool – NSW Department of Education](#)

[How to Establish a Morning Routine for Kids That Actually Works – A Fine Parent](#)

