

# KINDERGARTEN...I'M READY!

By: Real Life Families

## 1 ROUTINE

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**Kids thrive on routine. The best and strongest classrooms have solid routines...the same goes for our homes. Routines help kids get into a rhythm and brings confidence and security to their day. It is important to work with our children to create bedtime, morning, and after-school routines.**

**Bedtime:** Sleep is so important for our kids. Studies show that when kids get proper sleep every night, they are healthier, smarter, more focused, and less likely to be emotionally unstable.

- ✓ Have an earlier bedtime.
- ✓ Have a set bedtime.
- ✓ Get as much done the night before.
  - ✓ Lay out clothes.
  - ✓ Have backpack ready to go.
  - ✓ Lunch packed (keep it small and healthy—unfortunately, kids don't get much time to eat. Pack a lunch they will be able to finish and then have a healthy snack ready for them afterschool.)
  - ✓ Homework done (most homework in kindergarten is reading—read together as special time you can spend together.)

### **Morning Time:**

- ✓ Have a set Wake-Up Time.
- ✓ Have a Done-With-Breakfast Time.
- ✓ Have an Out-the-Door Time.
  - ✓ An Out-the-Door Checklist can be helpful (see attached).

### **After-School Time:**

- ✓ Have a set Homework Time and place.
- ✓ Have a healthy snack.
- ✓ Have plenty of time for outdoor play, exercise, quiet time, and rest.

## 2 RESPONSIBILITY

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**Empowering our kids to be more responsible is important—especially as they enter into kindergarten. They can be reminded what big kids they are becoming and that we are going to trust them to do more big kid things as they get older. Our kids are not helpless. In fact, they can be very helpful. Our kids can do a lot for themselves and really help out our families.**

- ✓ **When it comes to school, let's remind our children to ask: "What can I do all by myself?" Or "What can I do to be helpful?"**
  - ✓ Can I read and get my homework done without being asked?
  - ✓ Can I help pick out my clothes the night before?
  - ✓ Can I be a good listener and go to bed early and on time each night?
  - ✓ Can I get up on time and make sure I have everything I need to get out the door on time?
  
- ✓ **Let's always remember that our families are our teams. We can get our responsibilities done best when we work together! Let's ask ourselves the question: "How can we work as a team?"**
  - ✓ Ask for help or ask how you can help.
  - ✓ Understand that mistakes will be made: It's so important to let our kids make mistakes—forget their lunch or their backpack, lose a paper or homework assignment, etc. It is not our job to rescue them, but instead, we can work together to come up with a solution so that it doesn't happen again. For example, my son kept forgetting his lunch bag in the morning even though we had a checklist at the door. I didn't remind him nor did I run it over to the school. If he forgot it, he forgot it. When he came home, I asked how he solved the problem of forgetting his lunch. He said that he just ate the lunch at school. I asked how he paid for it. He said it was free. I reminded him that it was not free and that we had to pay for it through an account at school. So, he owed us \$2.00 because he wasn't supposed to eat hot lunch that day. He paid us the \$2.00 and didn't forget his lunch again! Again, it's not our job to fix their mistakes, but to work together to solve the problem and empower them to be more responsible in the future.
  - ✓ Have clear, fair expectations and consequences (and follow through!)
  - ✓ If something isn't working, work out a plan together to fix it.
  - ✓ Establish a home of teamwork and togetherness. **REMEMBER TO ALWAYS WORK TOGETHER...NOT AGAINST EACH OTHER.**
  - ✓ Say things like:
    - ✓ "We will figure this out together."
    - ✓ "How can we solve this problem together?"
    - ✓ "We are a team. I know we can figure out a way to work this out together."
    - ✓ "I know we're going to get this!"
    - ✓ "Let's keep trying. I believe in you."

## 3 RESOURCES

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**We are not alone in this parenting journey and during this time of transitioning into elementary school, it's important to know that we have resources available to us to help our child succeed. We must be proactive and not let little problems turn into big problems. The more we can nip things in the bud during kindergarten, the better their educational experience will be.**

- ✓ Pray—If you are a praying parent, the Lord is our greatest resource for wisdom on parenting. Pray for His guidance with everything—especially for the choices you make as a parent. And pray for your child. Pray for your child's protection, choices, friends, learning, etc. Pray. And pray often.
- ✓ Communicate with the teacher often—right away, let your child's teacher know that you are a parent who cares and that you are there to work together to help your child do the best he/she can.
- ✓ Connect with the PTA.
- ✓ Be an advocate for your child to get what he/she needs from the principal, social workers, counselors, and other support staff.
- ✓ Real Life Families is a resource for families too—we always have free resources and classes to help.

## 4 RELATIONSHIP

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**We, as parents, are our children's most valuable teachers and our homes are their first and best classrooms. Establishing routines, encouraging responsibility, and using the resources that are available to us is very important for our kids success at school, but (besides prayer), the absolute most important thing we can do for our kids is to nurture a close, positive relationship with them. The time, energy, and attention we give to our children to learn about and appreciate who they are and who God created them to be will help them, not only be more successful in school, but also more respectful in our homes and more kind and loving throughout their lives. Remember that we are raising kids who will be adults. Every second we spend with our children now is an investment in who they will be in the future.**

- ✓ Keep their schedule and activities light—we should never feel pressured to put our kids in every activity under the sun. School will take up enough of their time. The rest of their time would be more valuably spent with us. Know your kids. Know their limits. And give them space for downtime and for just being a kid!
- ✓ Ask about their day (attached is 20 questions to ask besides "How was your day?")
- ✓ Snuggle and connect at bedtime (attached is 4 important bedtime questions)
- ✓ Be thoughtful and spend time with them (attached is 25 ways to connect with your child)

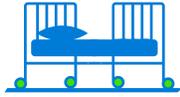
# OUT-THE-DOOR CHECKLIST



Get Dressed



Make Bed



Eat Breakfast



Brush Teeth



Shoes On



Homework



Back Pack



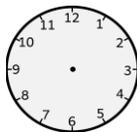
Lunch Bag (w/ cold pack) or lunch money



Water Bottle



On Time

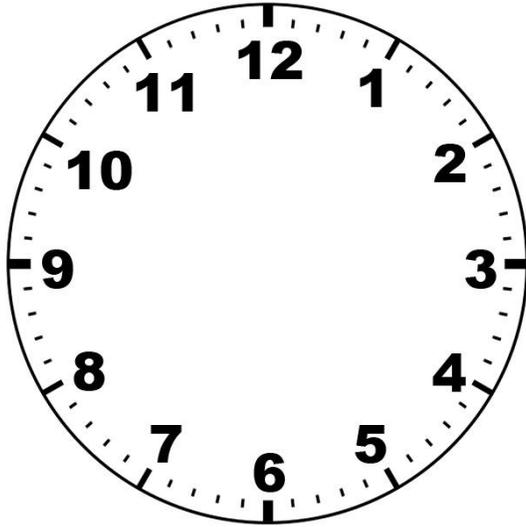


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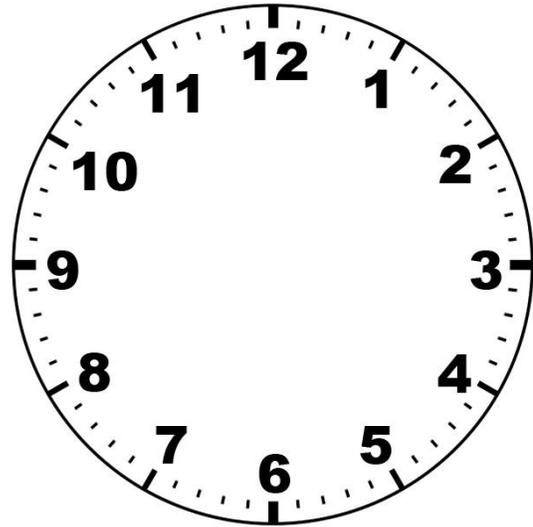
## Parent Checklist:

- Papers to be returned or signed
- Snack
- Any Notes to the Teacher?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

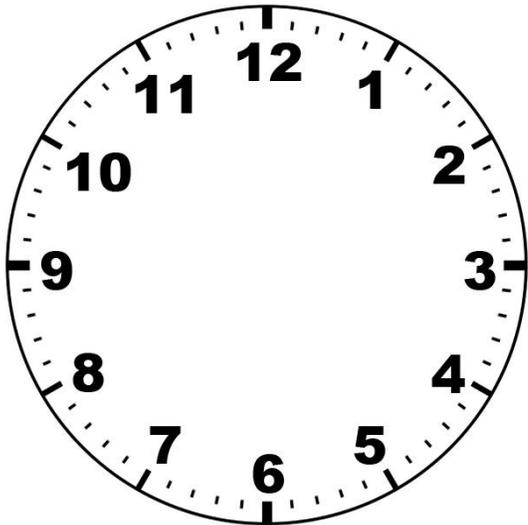
**Our Bedtime...**



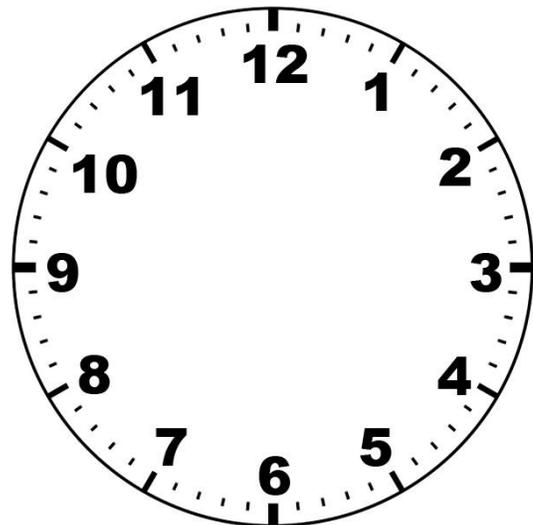
**Our Wake-Up Time...**



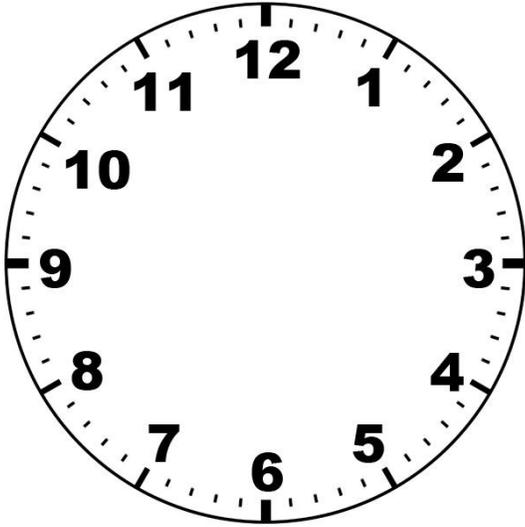
**Our Done-Eating-Breakfast Time...**



**Our Out-the-Door Time...**



## Homework Time...



Best place to do my homework will be...

# QUESTIONS TO ASK BESIDES “HOW WAS YOUR DAY?”



Oftentimes kids have a difficult time recalling general information about their day. You may get “I don’t know” Or “I don’t remember” or “Fine” responses to just “how was your day?” Try asking more specific questions and hopefully, you will hear more information about their day!

1. Who did you sit by at lunch?
2. Who did you play with at recess?
3. What did you play at recess?
4. How were you a good friend today?
5. Who was a good friend to you today?
6. What special did you have (P.E., Music, Art) today?
7. What book did your teacher read?
8. What was the book about?
9. What station/center did you get to do today?
10. How were you helpful today?
11. Did anything happen that made you sad or frustrated today?
12. Did anything happen that made you laugh or smile today?
13. What was your snack today?
14. Did you talk to anyone new today?
15. What did you create today?
16. What was hard for you today?
17. What was easy for you today?
18. How were you a problem-solver today?
19. Were there any questions you wanted to ask but didn’t?
20. Can you teach me something new you learned about today?

# THE 4 BEDTIME QUESTIONS



Connecting at bedtime is such an important part of the day. It is one more opportunity to snuggle, pray for, encourage, and teach your kids. It is also a very important time to listen to them, get to know them, and find out what is really going on in their lives outside of the busyness of the day. Turn the lights out, snuggle close, and have a little heart-to-heart chat every night. You will treasure this time with your kids and so will they!

1. What was your favorite part of your day?
2. What was your least favorite part of your day?
3. How did you show kindness and love today?
4. Do you have any questions or anything else you would like to share about your day?

# 25 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR KIDS



The number one thing you can do for your children is to build a close, positive relationship with them. They need your love, your time, and your attention more than anything else.

1. Leave a note that says “You’re awesome because...” in their lunch box, on their pillow, at the breakfast or dinner table, on the bathroom mirror, etc.
2. Each month, do something special with them on the day of the month they were born.
3. Have a tickle fight.
4. Find a book that has a movie to go with it. Read the book together then watch the movie together.
5. Go on a nature walk.
6. Play a sport—play catch, throw a football, shoot baskets, etc.
7. Learn something new—play the guitar, learn a new language, learn how to draw cartoon characters, etc.
8. Rub their back at night while you do the 4-bedtime questions.
9. Give them a high five.
10. Tell them what makes them unique and why you love that about them.
11. Surprise them by coming to lunch at school.
12. Watch a kids’ show/movie.
13. Help them with their homework.
14. Bake cookies.
15. Try a new fruit or vegetable.
16. Play freeze tag.
17. Build or create something—sand castle, Legos, mud mountain, artwork, an invention, a rocket, etc.
18. Go to a school activity together.
19. Make a list of your top 10 things you love about them and share it with them at dinner time.
20. Leave a notebook out for writing notes or drawing pictures back and forth.
21. Plant a new plant and care for it.
22. Go around the dinner table and share your high and low of the day.
23. Eat meals together.
24. Make a special breakfast for them on Saturday mornings.
25. Read them a story or tell them a story every night.