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*Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.*

## Morning Routines <sup>1</sup>

*Diana Converse<sup>2</sup>*

Waking a child and getting through the "morning routine" is one of the most common complaints of parents. We shouldn't be surprised. Many people would rather avoid getting out of a warm, cozy bed to face the pressures of another day. Children are no different. In fact, they have a few special excuses for being so grumpy in the morning. Children tend to sleep more deeply than adults. Research shows that they also need *more* sleep than adults, with most requiring a minimum of eight to ten hours of sleep a night.

To establish a more pleasant morning routine, experts at several universities recommend talking with your child about expectations and changes you would like to make in the household's morning routine.

Get up about 20 minutes earlier than your children so you can focus on what you need to accomplish to prepare for *your* day. Many parents find it's easiest to complete the majority of their personal morning routine before waking their children.

Start organizing clothing, lunches and even breakfast the night before. Young children can benefit from charts to help them remember to brush their teeth, get dressed, or make their bed each morning. The [National Network for Child Care](#) has a helpful chart that lists morning activities and helps distribute them fairly among family members or rotate them

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2. Diana Converse, Extension Agent III, Hillsborough County, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Reviewed by Donna Davis, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida.

to prevent feelings of being in a rut. Morning routines are a family affair. Remember that you are helping your children to learn to be responsible, so make the morning routine an opportunity for your children to achieve and succeed.

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