

Establishing a school routine

Getting ready for school in the morning and getting everybody out on time can be really stressful. You might be running around getting the coats, the hats and getting the bags and feeling quite stressed yourself as you do it.

It can be a bit stressful when you're all trying to get ready, the girls trying to get out, the boys are getting in their way, they can't get out on time and we sort of argue between ourselves.

You've got to leave the house at eight o'clock and it's like the army in our house.

The morning rush is, I don't know, I don't know the solution to it really.

With a little bit of preparation and some organisation in advance, it can be less stressful and you can all leave the house feeling slightly less rushed.

TOP TIPS Be aware of the different times your family wakes up.

... hurry up.

It can be really difficult to get teenagers up in the morning.

Yes, you leave it to the last minute, don't you, I have to throw you out the door.

My mum wakes me up and it takes her about five times or maybe more.

TOP TIPS Agree bedtimes suitable for their age...also limit late night computer and TV use.

Their sleep pattern tends to change, they might be night owls and find it really hard to get up in the morning. And also their priorities change, they want that sleep in.

I have to shout at her about ten times until she gets up and then she'll finally get up and I tell her what time ... I have to lie and tell her it's later than what it is.

TOP TIPS Try to plan ahead.

It can really set you up for a calmer morning if you set your own alarm ten minutes early. It gives you a chance to have a quiet cup of tea, a bit of breakfast before everything gets going and you're rushing round after the children.

TOP TIPS Encourage your teen to organise themselves.

It is really helpful to get your child in the habit of planning for whatever they need during the day. It's quite a good idea to have a short list on the back of the door which just says what they need,

so P.E. kit, ballet dancing, or swimming kit, so they can tick it off or check it before you go out.

TOP TIPS Encourage your teen's independence.

If you've got older children, say, young teens, and you still feel like you're doing everything for them in the morning, take stock. They should really be doing some things for themselves. And it's important for their independence. They've got to learn to get up themselves, take notice of their alarm, pack their bags and get organised.

TOP TIPS Keep breakfast simple.

Children really do benefit from some choice at breakfast because we don't always want the same food every morning, but keep the choices limited. Two options are plenty and then you're not running around trying to make several breakfasts.

TOP TIPS Try to avoid shouting.

Give me that phone. Enough of this. Clear up now. I'm in the car.

If you want your children to do something in the morning, you might be tempted to shout up the stairs or call at them from the kitchen. This kind of long distance instruction really doesn't work very well. It'll be much quicker if you go right up to them, so go up the stairs, go and find them and give them the instruction face to face.

My dad used to like pull my duvet off me. Hell.

Open the curtains wide open. Are you up, Fay? Yeah, yeah, I'm up, yeah. I'd still be in bed. She'd come up ten minutes later: Fay, you've fallen back asleep.

TOP TIPS Try to stay calm.

Mum, do you know where my tie is?

What is going on? How would I know where your tie is?

I don't know.

... and where is your cardigan? What is happening here? Rihanna.

If you find yourself getting really riled up, you know, that you might be shouting and going over the top, do step back. And a helpful little suggestion is to count backwards in sevens from a hundred. It's much better than counting from one to ten or backwards because you've really got to think about it and concentrate on the counting and that takes the edge off.

There was a little bit of a fight for the bathroom - three women, one bathroom, not good.

Help with everything she needs to hurry up out the door.

Make-up, hair.

Get that out of her handbag and make sure that's ready.

With a bit of planning, the morning rush needn't be quite so stressful. With good preparation, some help from the kids, you can get them out the door and set all of you up for a more relaxed and calmer day.

Involve them in planning ahead. Keep breakfast simple...only offer two choices. Try to stay calm.

