

Language & Learning

Positive Parenting

Using Routines to Prevent Problems

Problems are much easier to prevent than to stop or solve. Household routines help to prevent problems. Almost everything is new in your baby's world, especially at the beginning. A routine allows your baby to anticipate what is going to happen and experience fewer surprises. Routines help children cooperate, because they come to expect certain ways of doing things. For example, the tot figures out that naptime happens after lunch, and goes along with the routine.

Household routines also give you and your baby something positive to do. Many babies have a set activity that is part of someone else's routine. Dishwashing time may be when your baby crawls to the bottom drawer in the kitchen that holds dozens of big plastic lids, and carefully unloads and chews on them until the last dish is done. Going in the car seat to pick up big brother or sister from school is the time when certain padded or cardboard books come out of the diaper bag. Other active routines may involve the parent and baby directly, for example, changing diapers, feeding and getting ready for bed. The routine is a time for positive attention and communication.