

Scheduling

Minor adjustments to your schedule can make a major difference in reducing stress



Be Strategic



Children tend to do better with short durations of work



Arrange your schedule for success:



- List everything you would like for your child to get done in the day
- Divide those tasks into easy/fun tasks and harder/less preferred tasks

Alternate easy and hard tasks when creating your schedule

Build Momentum



Schedule several easier tasks in a row before a hard task

Follow a hard task with your child's most preferred task

Step 1 MAKE A TASK LIST

- Eat breakfast
- Practice spelling words
- Read for 10 mins
- Play outside
- Clean up dishes
- Do an art project
- Take out trash
- Get dressed
- Play a game

Step 2 SORT INTO EASY AND HARD

Easy

- Eat breakfast
- Play outside
- Do an art project
- Play a game
- Get dressed

Hard

- Practice spelling words
- Read for 10 mins
- Take out trash
- Clean up dishes

Step 3 ORGANIZE TO BUILD MOMENTUM

- Get dressed (easy)
- Eat breakfast (easy)
- Clean up dishes (hard)
- Play a game (easy)
- Read for 10 mins (hard)
- Practice spelling words (hard)
- Do an art project (easy)
- Take out trash (hard)
- Play outside (easy)

Build Reinforcement Into Your Schedule

Make your schedule activity based, not time based

- By working through your schedule this way, preferred items and activities can be accessed by completing tasks and are not based upon time
- Organizing your schedule this way will motivate your child to finish tasks they don't like so that they can get to ones that are more fun

Keep reminding them what is coming on the schedule, especially when it is something they want to do

- "remember, after you finish ____, you can watch your show"
- "You just have __ things left on your list before you can go play"

Acknowledge when your child accomplishes each task and praise them for their hard work (even when they complete an easy task)

- "you are doing a great job!"
- "I'm so proud of you!"
- "thank you for doing ____!"



Other Scheduling Tips

Provide Clear Signals



When working from home, use signs or signals around the house to show when you are available

I can talk

The green sign is for when you are not working and while you might not be able to play, you are able to talk, answer questions, and you are available if needed.

I am working, but can talk if needed

The yellow sign is for when you are working and prefer not to be interrupted but, if they need something, you can make an exception

I am busy, please do not

The red sign is for times when you might be on the phone or a video conference and cannot be interrupted

When using the red sign:

- Provide a way for others to leave notes or otherwise tell you what they need, and make sure these notes will go in a place where you can see them
- Before using this system, explain what a true emergency is to your children, and that they can interrupt you when the red sign is up if someone is hurt or bleeding
- If your child does interrupt you when the red sign is up, remind them of the rules and redirect them to leave you a note.
- Try not to leave the red sign up for long periods of time

Use Visual Cues

Write out the schedule for the day and, as you move from one task to the next, mark it off and review what is coming next

- "First you are going to do your worksheet, then you will get to play a board game."

Transition Between Activities

To ease transitions between preferred and less preferred activities, give warnings that the activity is ending

- Don't just give 1 warning. Give at least 3
- Hold firm to your time
- Important: when time is up, firmly end the activity (even if you have to unplug a device or physically take it away)
- It may take time for children to adjust to new transition rules

Practice Makes Perfect

- Schedules are rarely perfect the first day.
- Remember you and your children are learning something new.
- It will take some practice and some trial and error
- Don't give up after the first day, make adjustments and try again the next day

