



Managing Morning Madness

Are your mornings rushed, chaotic and disorganized? Then it's time to get control and make morning a good start to a wonderful day! When your morning activities run smoothly, and you're out the door on time it can make your whole day feel better. Follow these steps:

Start your morning: at night! A real key to smoothing out your morning is to prepare as much as you can the night before. This means choosing the day's clothing, packing lunches, gathering homework, signing permission slips and setting the table for breakfast.

Post a calendar. Buy the biggest wall calendar you can find and hang it in a central location. Write down events and appointments for everyone. Use different color marking pens to code items for easy reading. (As an example: ball practice in red, carpool in green, doctors/dentists in purple) Keep the calendar up to date and you'll be more organized!

Create a drop box. Have a labeled box for each family member by the door. Use this to store shoes, keys, backpacks, coats and anything else that goes out the door with you in the morning. Plastic tubs or decorated crates make great drop boxes!

Use a morning list. Sit down and analyze a typical morning. Make a list of everything that needs to be done. Create a poster-sized list of the standard morning activities listed in order to be done:

- Wake at 7:00
- Get dressed
- Make bed
- Eat breakfast
- Make lunch
- Feed pets
- Meet bus at 8:00

If you have a child who gets easily distracted and ignores the morning chart - don't give up! Just make a small minisize chart, laminate it, put it on a chain and let your child wear it as his "morning necklace" Your part is to make a few gentle reminders, "How are you doing on your chart this morning?"

Check out sleep time. If your child has trouble getting up in the morning and sticking to his schedule take a look at what time he or she goes to bed. Without adequate sleep a child won't be able to follow a morning routine successfully. Fix problems with a family meeting. If problems persist take the time to sit down with your children and talk about it. Let everyone have a turn talking, and then work to arrive at solutions that will benefit everyone.

Praise successes. Remember, your words of praise will encourage your children to continue to meet their goals!

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting