

KIDS AFTER-SCHOOL BLUEPRINT

Establishing a structured routine for children when they come home from school can greatly support their emotional self-regulation. Here's a suggested routine:

ARRIVAL HOME: 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM

- Hang coats on hooks in designated area.
- Remove lunch bags from backpack and place them on the kitchen counter.
- Remove any paper from backpack (arts/crafts, parent notices/permission slips) and place them in the designated area.
- Hang backpacks in the designated area.
- Wash hands thoroughly before proceeding to other activities.
- Greet family members and share one experience from the day.

SNACK TIME: 4:30 PM - 4:45 PM

- Refuel with a healthy snack from the provided options.
- Eat at the kitchen table or designated eating area.
- No screen time allowed during snack time to encourage mindful eating and social interaction.

HOMEWORK HUSTLE: 4:45 PM - 5:15 PM

- Dive into homework or study time with laser focus and determination.
- Work in a quiet, well-lit area free from distractions.

ADVENTURE OR RELAXATION: 5:15 PM - 6:00 PM

- Engage in a relaxing activity such as reading, drawing, or listening to music.
- Spend time outdoors, if weather permits, engaging in physical activities like biking or playing in the yard.
- Limit screen time to 30 minutes for educational or age-appropriate entertainment purposes.

CHORE CRUSADES: 6:00 PM - 6:15 PM

- Assist with age-appropriate household chores such as setting the table or tidying up shared spaces.
- Encourage teamwork and cooperation among siblings.

FAMILY FIESTA: 6:15 PM - 6:45 PM

- Gather at the dinner table as a family.
- Practice good manners and polite conversation.
- Each family member shares one highlight from their day.
- Kids help with clearing the plates after dinner.

WIND DOWN: 6:45 PM - 7:30 PM

- Begin preparing for bedtime routines.
- Take a warm bath and slip into pajamas. Engage in calming activities such as reading a book, or practicing deep breathing exercises.
- Brush teeth.
- Dim the lights and minimize stimulating activities to signal to the body that it's time to unwind.

BEDTIME ROUTINE: 7:30 PM - 8:00 PM

- Kids enter bedroom.
- Choose a comforting stuffed animal or blanket.
- Spend quality time with parents for a bedtime story or gentle conversation.
- Lights out by 8:00 PM for the little ones, with older kiddos hitting the hay by 9:00 PM.

By implementing this routine, children can develop essential time management skills, establish healthy habits, and learn effective strategies for emotional self-regulation.

Remember, parenting is all about trial and error. So don't be afraid to tweak and adjust until you find what works best for your family.