

# **Tips from the Trenches – Manz Elementary School**

## **Topic: Routines**

We know that families are often searching for tips/ideas about how to handle things at home. We plan to send out some “tips” written by our very own Manz staff members to provide families with some helpful information.

Si usted quiere ayuda en interpretar esta carta, por favor póngase en contacto con el asistente de educación bilingüe al 715-852-3962 y deje un mensaje con su nombre y número de teléfono.

Yog koj xav tau kev pab kom koj nkag siab tsab ntawv nov zoo, hais ua lus Hmoob. Thov hu xov tooj rau koj tus menyuam lub tsev kawm ntawv yog 715-852-3962. Hais lus tseg, hais koj lub npe thiab muab koj tus xov tooj tseg. Peb ib tug neeg txhais lus mam li hu qhia rau koj kom koj nkag siab zoo tshaj qhov nov ntxiv.

Routines. So important, yet so difficult to achieve. Nowadays with work, school, parent, sports and activity schedules it can feel almost impossible to develop routines at home. Throw in school breaks and snow days and then routines become even more daunting. As a mother of four with a husband who frequently travels for work, plus a full-time job, I have had my share of routine development. But here’s the deal, it works and can make your busy schedules feel more manageable.

Years ago, I received some good advice, “your next day starts the night before”. Here are some “night before” tips...

- Decide what your child is wearing to school the night before. For picky dressers, this can alleviate many morning battles.
- Pack lunches if your child eats cold lunch.
- Pack snacks. School age children can do this independently.
- Have backpacks packed and ready to go. School age children can do this independently, also.
- Sign necessary school paperwork.
- And, yes, establish a bedtime routine. Bath/shower, story, bedtime, whatever works for your family.
- Always give your child time to unwind after a busy day at school.

Now I know all about nights when an older sibling’s activity goes past a younger one’s bedtime, but on the nights you can, stick with it!

Onto tips for mornings...

- Establish a wake-up time. For older children, use an alarm clock (but not a cell phone-that's another tip for another day).
- Have your child eat and get dressed as best they can independently.
- Do not engage in power struggles (easier said than done). When a child's behavior is escalating, offer choices (no more than 2), but do not raise your voice to do battle. It takes two to argue and when your child sees that you're in charge and in control of your own emotions, it models appropriate behavior to them. I typically say, "I see you're angry/frustrated/upset. I will come back when you're ready." And then? Go about your business of getting ready for your day. Your child will eventually calm down because there is no one to do battle with (unless a pesky sibling gets involved).

To single parents/guardians/grandparents; hats off to you! Routines can feel different when children have been at another home for a week or the weekend. Remember: your home, your routines. Children will adapt and appreciate this (although they may not tell you this until they are 25!).

After years of establishing routines in my own home and classroom, I know how hard it can be to stay the course, yet so rewarding when it works. And routines change with the seasons. Hang in there, start small, but start somewhere. My motto is "progress not perfection". I may not be an expert, but I do have plenty of experience. Feel free to contact me with any routine dilemmas you might be experiencing.

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