



## Busy Families: Establishing a Morning Routine

Mornings can feel like a race against the clock for many families. Between getting everyone dressed, fed, packed and out the door, it's no wonder that this time of day often feels chaotic. But with a bit of planning, mornings don't have to be overwhelming.

### Start the Night Before

A smoother morning starts the evening before. Spend a few minutes before bedtime checking in with your children about the day ahead—it's a great time to uncover forgotten permission slips or plan for upcoming activities. Preparing lunches after dinner and laying out clothes in advance can prevent last-minute scrambling. Bathing at night helps kids wind down and avoids bathroom traffic in the morning. These small evening habits ease decision-making and make mornings easier to manage.

### Set Up for Success

An organized environment helps set a calm tone. Keep backpacks, jackets, homework and after-school items in a spot by the door so nothing gets left behind. Pre-set breakfast—cereal bowls or milk cups—to ease the morning rush. Stash extra shoes, a jacket and a spare lunch in the car just in case. Waking up 30 minutes earlier, or staggering wake-up times, can make a big difference in how the morning flows.

### Make Mornings Meaningful

Beyond efficiency, don't forget to add a little warmth to the morning routine. Try creating a cheerful wake-up ritual with a fun phrase or a favorite song. Sit down for breakfast together at least once a week—setting the table the night before can help make this easier. Avoid distractions like the TV; instead, opt for music or a quick check of the weather on the radio. Using a whiteboard, picture chart or calendar can help children understand their responsibilities and look ahead at the week. And no matter how rushed things feel, take time to offer praise, patience and a heartfelt “I love you” before everyone heads out.

Mornings will always come with some hustle, but they don't have to be stressful. With a little planning, structure and a focus on what really matters, your family can create a morning routine that brings more calm, cooperation and connection to the start of each day. A steady, supportive routine not only makes mornings smoother. Remember - it's not about being perfect; it's about making space for meaningful moments before the day begins.

**BHS provides referrals to qualified mental health professionals that can help. Call BHS at 800-245-1150 to speak to your designated Care Coordinator about your benefits and options for support.**