

On Time Strategies

The start of a new school year brings new routines into the lives of parents and students. It can be difficult to transition from a carefree summer to a busy school year. Getting kids to school on time is a common struggle at the beginning of the school year. And if strategies aren't put into place, it can continue to be a problem throughout the year and even a child's life. The following are suggestions from the Cool Responses to Hot Buttons Campaign sponsored by Washington State PTA, Family Help Line and King Co. Library System.

Plan Ahead

- DAILEY ROUTINES: help your child set daily routines for morning, after school & bedtime. A checklist is helpful for your child to remember what to do.
- PREPARE AHEAD: make morning less hectic by preparing the night before. Make lunches, lay out school clothes, pack backpacks.
- BUY A CLOCK: get an alarm clock for your child to encourage responsibility for getting up in the morning.
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During the Day

- CUT CORNERS: if your child has a regular routine but is running late, help her cut corners or shorten parts of the routine. For example, she can make her bed when she gets home from school.
- TRANSITION TIME: let your child know that you will be leaving & what she needs to do to get ready, for example, "We will be leaving in 10 minutes. You need to have your lunch packed and your rain boots on."
- PRAISE: give compliments when your child is on time; express appreciation.
- ALLOW MORE TIME: one child may need more time than others to get ready. Getting up 10 minutes before the other children may make the difference in being ready on time.
- RHYTHMS & RITUALS: set up a special bedtime ritual with your child. Such as reading a book or talking about the day. Older children may want time to read to themselves before turning out the light.
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If All Else Fails...

- OFF LIMITS: if you can't tear your child away from the TV, games or books in the morning, make those activities off limits before school.
- CUT BACK: if your family is always rushing or late, consider cutting back on the number of activities you commit to.

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