

The Morning Routine

by Vicki Hoefle

Parent Educator, Mother of 5

Creator of the [Parenting On Track™ Home Program](#)

The morning routine has long been one of the “challenging” times in the life of a family. We’ve all had those mornings when kids don’t want to get out of bed, they find their clothes “just aren’t right”, or maybe their breakfast lacks appeal. All these small moments can quickly add up to power struggles, stress and a bumpy start to the day. As parents, we understand that the morning routine sets the tone for the rest of the day, so it is important to start on the right foot.

Here are a few simple tips that you could use every day to avoid those power struggles and remind your kids that you believe in them and love them. This, of course, translates into a relaxed, confident and enthusiastic child. You know, a kid with a “can do” attitude, one who enters school with a smile, a swagger and a “bring it on” look in his or her eyes.

1. Appreciations:

Identify specific character traits in your child that you admire and make an observation about one every morning.

- Imagine being greeted each morning by someone who clearly knows you and appreciates you.
- These appreciations might sound something like:
 - You always wake up in a good mood.
 - You are such a curious kid.
 - You can make your mom and I smile even when we are upset about something.
 - You are incredibly patient with your siblings.

2. Participation:

Invite your children to do more for themselves.

- Imagine being treated like a capable, competent person by the people most important to you – your parents.
- Try some or all of these suggestions:
 - If you have been getting them up, ask them if they want to get an alarm clock and get up on their own.
 - If you have been making their breakfast, ask them if they want to make pancakes with you this morning.
 - If you nag them to get ready, try being quiet and see what happens.

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3. Connection:

Create a final connection with your kids in the evening before they go to bed.

- Have faith in your children and show them that no matter what happens – you love them.
 - Ask questions that are relaxed and open ended (and not about the upcoming test).
 - Sit quietly at the bottom of the bed and tell them you just want to hang out with them for a few more minutes.
 - Do something unexpected (like paint toenails, or give a back scratch).
 - Create a positive affirmation of what the next day will look like, together.

I think you'll be surprised how quickly you can turn the morning into a time of day you actually look forward to by incorporating any combination of these ideas into your routine. These suggestions are only part of the many things that parents can do right away that have a significant impact on the attitude of their children as they navigate their lives, start their days and face daily challenges - regardless of whether those challenges are standardized tests or deciding what to have for breakfast. All of this, and much more, can be found right now, today, in the Parenting On Track™ Home Program.

Parenting On Track™ offers families access to proactive, sustainable, age-independent strategies to help you parent from your best. The program is based on long-term solutions which help children implement and practice life skills that will help them maneuver their way from childhood through adolescence, and into young adulthood with confidence and enthusiasm. The fundamental principles of Parenting On Track™ focus on training, the understanding that parenting is a journey, and that there are no quick fixes. I teach the program because, as a mother of five, I have lived (and taught) it for twenty years and I know it works.

To learn more about how Parenting On Track™ can help you and your kids develop a better morning routine, please visit www.parentingontrack.com, or call 888-660-7668.