



# SETTING EFFECTIVE ROUTINES FOR CHILDREN

Amina- Education Mental Health Practitioner  
Brent Mental Health Support Team

**NHS**  
Central and  
North West London  
NHS Foundation Trust



# WHAT PART OF YOUR DAY FEELS MOST STRESSFUL?



"You're not alone — many families struggle with busy routines."



# WHAT IS A ROUTINE?

Helps children know what to expect

Happens in the same order

Includes daily things like waking up, getting ready, or bedtime

# WHY ROUTINES MATTER FOR CHILDREN



- 🧠 Supports learning and brain development



- 😊 Builds confidence and independence



- 🛌 Improves sleep and focus



- 👂 Encourages listening and cooperation

- ❤️ Helps children feel safe and secure



# HOW ROUTINES HELP FAMILIES

- Less stress in the mornings and at bedtime
- Fewer arguments and power struggles
- Helps the whole family work as a team
- Brings more calm and connection



- Busy schedules
- Kids resisting routines
- Parents working different shifts
- Younger siblings needing more help
- “No family is perfect. It’s okay to start small and build over time.”



# COMMON CHALLENGES!



# EFFECTIVE TIPS FOR SETING UP NEW ROUTINES:

## Start with One Routine:

Choose one part of the day (e.g., bedtime). Focus on that for a week or two.

## Make It Visual:

Use pictures or drawings for each step (younger kids love this!)

## Involve Your Child:

Let them choose the order: "Story first or pyjamas first?" Kids are more likely to follow what they helped create!





### **Keep It Consistent**

- Same time, same order
- Predictability makes kids feel secure and helps them cooperate

### **Use positive prompts:**

Instead of “Hurry up!”, try “What’s next in your routine?”

Keep your tone calm and friendly

### **Allow Extra Time**

**Plan for 5–10 extra minutes to avoid rushing**  
**Everyone is calmer when there’s a buffer!**

# **EFFECTIVE TIPS FOR SETTING UP NEW ROUTINES:**

### **Praise & Encourage**

- Catch them doing something right
- “I love how you brushed your teeth without being asked!”



# \* EXAMPLE ROUTINE



Morning:

Wake up, toilet, brush teeth, get dressed, breakfast, pack bag



After School: Snack, reading/homework, playtime, dinner



Bedtime: Bath, pyjamas, brush teeth, story, lights out





If you think your child could benefit from accessing 1:1 support from the MHST, please speak to us or school

- 6-8 sessions 1:1 Parent-led Guided Self Help

Managing Behaviour Challenges  
(special time, following instructions, setting routines, encouraging desirable behaviours, etc.)



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**NEXT COFFEE MORNING AT**

**Brentfield :**

**14<sup>th</sup> May**

**HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN THEN!**

