

Peaceful Mornings

by Susan Tracy McDaniel, The Montessori Group

Simple routines that help your whole family start the day with calm

Mornings don't have to feel rushed or stressful. When children know what to expect and have opportunities to do things for themselves, everyone begins the day feeling more confident and connected. The secret? Peaceful mornings actually begin **the night before**.

Why It Matters

How the morning begins often sets the tone for the rest of the day. A calm start helps children:

- Feel secure and capable
- Arrive at school ready to learn
- Practice independence
- Reduce stress for the whole family
- Rather than rushing from one task to the next, create routines your child can gradually learn to manage with increasing independence.

The Evening Routine

Prepare **today** for **tomorrow**. Doing a few things the night before makes mornings much smoother. With your child, consider:

- ✓ Tidying up toys and belongings
- ✓ Packing backpacks and lunches
- ✓ Setting shoes, coats, hats, mittens, and other outdoor clothing by the door
- ✓ Allowing the child to choose tomorrow's clothing from a few acceptable options
- ✓ Bath and toileting
- ✓ Putting pajamas on
- ✓ Brushing teeth
- ✓ Having a light snack or drink (if appropriate)
- ✓ Quiet stories, conversation, cuddles, or prayers
- ✓ Turning off screens well before bedtime



Create a Peaceful Bedtime

Young children thrive on predictable routines. Try to:

- Keep bedtime around the same time each evening.
- Use soft lighting and quiet activities before sleep.
- End the day with warmth and connection.

Most young children need approximately 10-12 hours of sleep, although every child is different. The Sleep Foundation provides recommendations [here](#).

More practical guidance for life with infants and toddlers can be found inside The Montessori Group's [free community](#).

Peaceful Mornings

by Susan Tracy McDaniel, The Montessori Group



Don't Forget Yourself!

Children borrow our calm.

A peaceful morning is much easier when parents have prepared, rested, and given themselves a little time before children wake.

If possible:

- Prepare what you need the night before.
- Wake up 30 minutes before your children.
- Begin the day calmly—you set the emotional tone.

Your Child's Morning Routine

As children grow, they can gradually become responsible for many parts of their morning. A simple sequence might include:

- Wake up
- Make the bed (keep their bedding simple)
- Use the bathroom
- Get dressed (with clothing they chose the night before)*
- Brush hair
- Brush teeth
- Join the family for breakfast



*Parents can provide pieces your child can put on independently.

For a wonderful real-life example of a calm, respectful morning routine, we encourage you to watch **Edison's Day**, which beautifully illustrates how young children thrive with predictable rhythms, independence, and unhurried time together. [Watch Edison's Day](#).

Before You Leave

Once the routine is established, try replacing reminders with natural cues. Instead of repeatedly saying, "It's time to go!" simply begin putting on your shoes, gathering your keys, and heading toward the door. Children often respond better to what they see than what they repeatedly hear.

Peaceful Mornings

by Susan Tracy McDaniel, The Montessori Group

When Things Don't Go as Planned

Every family has difficult mornings. Rather than rescuing or rushing, allow children to experience reasonable, logical consequences whenever it is safe to do so. For example, if a child delays getting dressed, they may finish dressing after arriving at school or in the car (when appropriate and safe).

The goal isn't punishment, rather, it is helping children understand how their choices affect the morning routine.

Build in a Little Extra Time

Observe how long your child truly needs to complete their routine independently, then add a few extra minutes.

Those few minutes often become the most enjoyable part of the morning.

You might:

- Read a book together
- Listen to music
- Play outside
- Have a conversation
- Simply enjoy being together

Whenever possible, avoid television before school, as it tends to encourage passive rather than active engagement.

Remember:

Peaceful mornings aren't about perfection. They're about creating predictable routines, preparing ahead, and giving children opportunities to do more for themselves, one small step at a time. With consistency, mornings become less about rushing and more about beginning the day together.

Helpful Ideas

Consider creating:

- A simple photo book showing each step of the bedtime routine
- A morning routine photo book
- A visual routine chart for children around age three and older

These visual reminders often reduce the need for verbal prompts.

