

Getting Out the Door on Time

Professor Matt Sanders

FOR MANY FAMILIES THE MORNING RUSH HOUR IS THE MOST STRESSFUL PART OF THE DAY. SO HOW CAN YOU AND THE KIDS GET OUT THE DOOR ON TIME?

The key is organisation — and the place to start is your own organisation. Set up an effective routine. For example, if you need to leave by 8.15 am, don't get out of bed at 7.30 am when you know it takes an hour to get ready.

The rule is get yourself ready first, before your child. To avoid last minute rushing prepare some things the night before and go to bed at a reasonable hour so you'll wake up early.

I also recommend against having the television on first thing in the morning when preparing to go out. Better to make sure the children are dressed before breakfast and make any television watching dependent on being fully ready to leave.

Let your child know ahead of time that you'll be going out and explain exactly what the day's activities will be and their time requirements.

Younger children can learn the importance of organisation by becoming involved in the process of getting ready rather than having everything done for them. Teaching children to get dressed by themselves is a chance to practice independent skills and it also saves you time.

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You may like to try the “beat the clock” game. Your child's goal is to be ready before the alarm clock sounds off. If your child wins, he earns a small treat or reward, such as a favourite snack in his lunch box.

Tell your child exactly what tasks he must do to be ready to leave and thus win the reward. Make sure you set the timer for a reasonable amount of time and avoid giving repeated instructions or nagging your child to hurry up.

Often it will only take a two-week period of beating the clock before the rewards and the clock are phased out. Remember to always praise your child's achievements in learning better organisation.

While you never want to become too time conscious, good organisation, particularly in the mornings, certainly helps. Everything runs smoother if all family members know how to pull their weight.

Find more parenting tips at: manitoba.ca/triplep or call 945-4777 in Winnipeg or toll-free 1-877-945-4777.

Professor Matt Sanders is founder of the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program.

