

Routine Charts

Objective:

To avoid power struggles while helping children feel more capable when they use their power in constructive ways to organize their lives.

Materials:

- Flip chart
- Marking Pens
- Characteristics and Life Skills chart from the Two Lists Activity

Comment:

Children feel empowered and motivated to cooperate when they are respectfully included in problem solving—including the creation of routine charts.

Directions:

1. Ask for a volunteer to role-play a three-year-old (or whatever age you want) to create a bedtime routine.
2. You (the facilitator) can role-play the parent.
3. Go to the flip chart with the “child” and ask him or her to tell you what he or she needs to do to get ready for bed. Write every task on the flip chart. (Brush teeth, bath, jammies, story, etc.)
4. If the child forgets something, it is okay to say, “What about picking out your clothes for tomorrow?” or whatever else is forgotten. (Having your child lay out clothes for the next day will make your morning routine go much smoother.)
5. If your child wants screen time (or anything else you don’t want as part of the routine chart), say something like, “That can’t be part of your bedtime routine, but we can put it on our family meeting agenda (or for one-to-one problem-solving) and talk about when you can do that.”
6. After getting all the items on the flip chart, ask the child to rank order what needs to be done first, then next until all the tasks have a number.

7. Ask the child if he or she would like to draw pictures of each task or have you take a picture of him or her doing each task that can be glued on to the routine chart later.
8. Process with the volunteer who role-played the child by asking, "What were you thinking, feeling, and deciding while being included in creating a routine chart?" Take the child to the Characteristics and Life Skills chart from the Two Lists Activity and ask if he or she is learning any of these.
9. Let the routine chart be the boss. In other words, instead of nagging, ask, "What is next on your routine chart?"
10. Avoid rewards, which take away from the child's inner sense of accomplishment and capability.
11. Ask participants what they learned from this activity.

EXTENSION

12. If there is time, have participant's pair up and take turns role-playing a parent and a child creating a routine chart together.
13. Ask for volunteers to share what they created, and what they learned in the process.

Comment: One mother took photos of her child doing each task. Together they went to the craft supply store and purchased a wide ribbon and a stapler and a hook for hanging. Her son then stapled each photo in order (with the first task at the top), and added numbers 1 through 7 (he was learning numbers) and hung it on the back of his bedroom door. He was so proud to show everyone his routine.