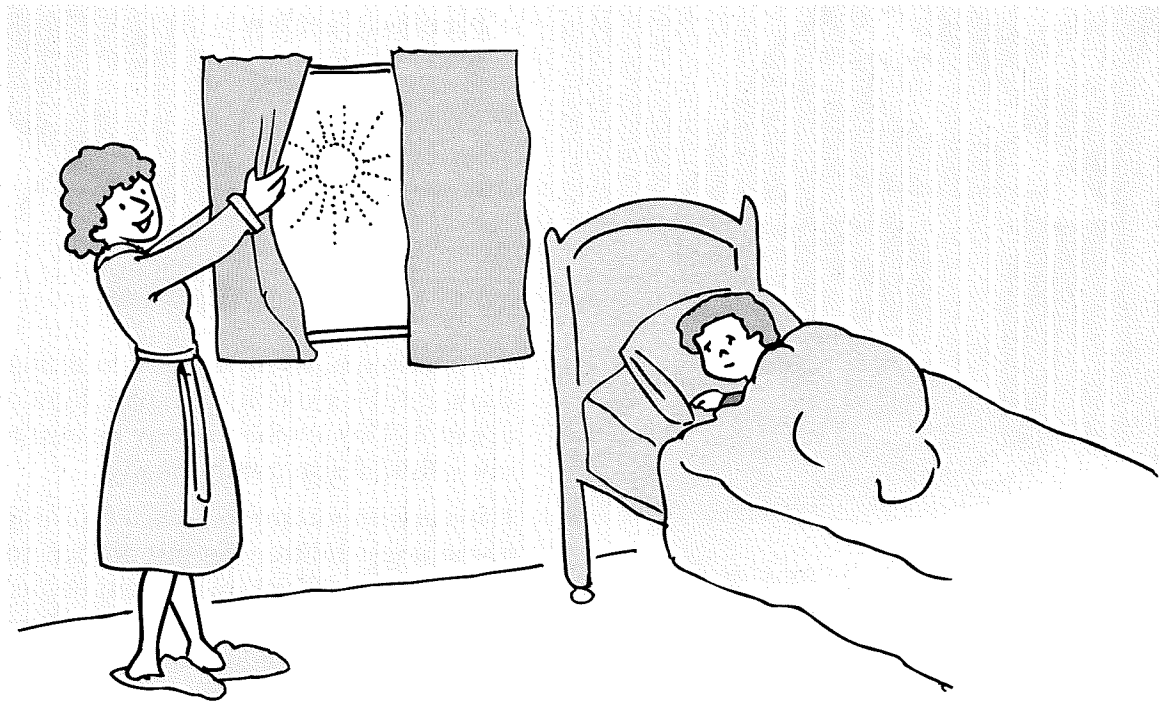


# The Morning Struggle

## 2 to 5 Years



Sometimes it is hard to get children ready for the day. It helps if you do the same things in the same order each morning. A regular routine helps children get to day care, preschool and kindergarten on time.

**Mornings are easier if your child gets enough sleep at night. Children need eleven to thirteen hours of sleep.**

### What is happening?

Most children have some trouble in the morning. They may find it hard to get up or get dressed or eat breakfast.

### Why is it happening?

At this age, children:

- take more time because they are learning to do things for themselves;
- move slowly when they eat or put on their clothes;

- may want to sleep or play;
- are distracted easily and have trouble concentrating on what they need to do;
- do not understand the meaning of time.

### What can you try?

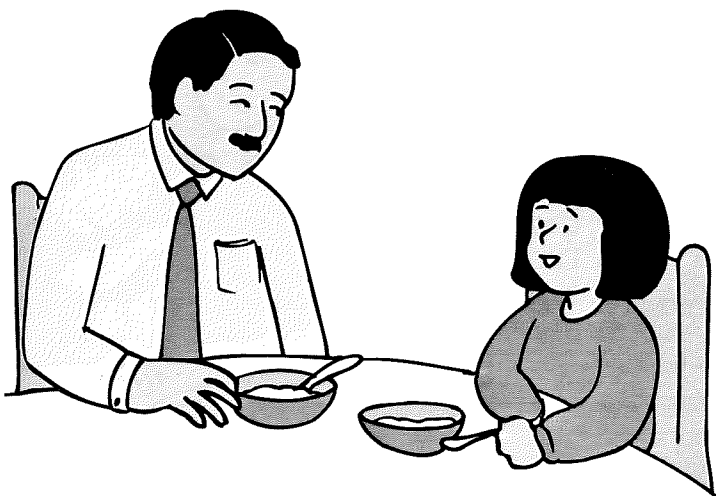
- Have a morning routine – do the same things in the same order each morning.  
Example:
  1. Get up.
  2. Get dressed.
  3. Eat breakfast.
  4. Brush teeth.



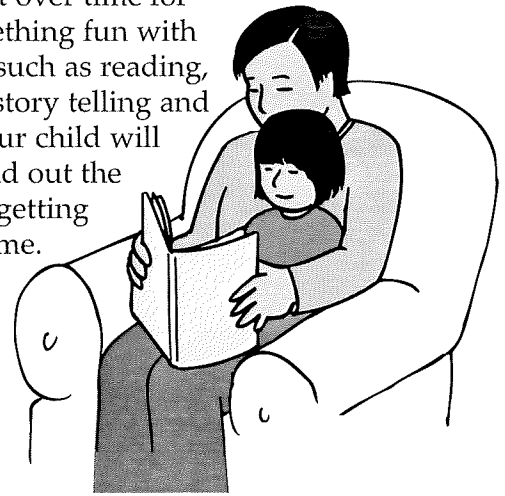
- Give yourself and your child enough time for these morning activities.
- Pick out the child's clothes and make lunches the night before. Let your child decide what to wear and which healthy foods to eat when possible.



- Wake your child slowly by making some 'morning noises' when it's time for your child to get up – open the curtains, make some toast, turn on the radio or some music, boil the water in the kettle, etc.
- Ask children to do only what they are able to do. Children can follow one simple instruction at a time.



- Put away anything that will distract your child. For example, leave the television off.
- Make a quick and healthy breakfast.
- Praise children as they get ready for the day.
- Use any left over time for doing something fun with your child such as reading, colouring, story telling and singing. Your child will begin to find out the benefits of getting ready on time.



All children have some fussy mornings. On those days it won't help to nag, fight or talk about it. This is when it may be best to help your child finish getting ready.

It is very important to have a morning routine. Sometimes children get out of their routine when they are ill or away from home. Start the routine again as soon as possible. It may take time to get your child into a routine, but it will help make every morning a good morning.

For more information,  
 contact a Public Health Nurses at  
 Vancouver Coastal Health  
[www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)  
 or visit the VCH Parenting Website  
<http://parenting.vch.ca/>

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