

## Morning Madness? - Cut It Out

Many families struggle to get out of the house in the morning. If you are having morning meltdowns, you really need to Cut It Out! It isn't a great way for anybody to start the day. Kids pick up on their parent's stress and young kids struggle to understand the concept of time. If morning is repeatedly chaotic and stressful devote yourself to turning things around and focus for at least a two to three week period until healthier patterns of behavior can take over.

- Start the morning off by connecting (before directing) for at least five minutes with the kids. Hugs, eye contact, smiles and pleasant conversation can turn the tone into something positive.
- Have a glass of juice or a piece of fruit for your child to eat before they plant their feet on the floor. This takes care of the morning grumpies caused by no food for so many hours.
- Have a family meeting and brainstorm on ideas regarding the morning rush.
- Get organized the night before; lunches, what you need for work, kid's knapsacks (packed by them to promote independence) and clothing.
- Get your children into self-help routines if they are over 3 so that they can dress themselves before breakfast.
- Keep the television set off if you have young kids unless you can use it as a bonus for getting ready early with time to spare. "When you get ready, have your breakfast and get all your things at the front door, then you can watch your show." When/then is an excellent strategy for getting kids to take responsibility.
- Dress your kids the night before, what's a few wrinkles? (just kidding, sort of)
- This you won't like, get up fifteen minutes earlier.
- Get out of the nagging trap which is doing your child's thinking for them, instead use a one or two word reminder; "lunch" "homework" "clothes" but give them a chance to think for themselves first.
- Let natural consequences go to work if the child is old enough and the consequences aren't devastating – it isn't that fun having to get dressed in the van or walk into school late or forget something like your lunch. Let them start to take on responsibility for themselves!
- Stick to your jobs and your structure and let the kids stick to theirs. Just meet them at the front door without nagging and getting uptight. Set a timer if you have to for the five minute warning.