

Reestablishing Routines in the New Year...

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The morning routine is equally important. Strive for consistent wake-up times, even on the weekends.

If your child is resistant, teach them how their sleep routine helps their body and mind. For example: "Your body relaxes and grows stronger when you get enough sleep, so you feel good afterward."

Reintroduce Standard Mealtimes

Holiday snacking and large meals at family gatherings can disrupt normal eating habits. Reinstate regular meal and snack times to help your child feel grounded. Offer balanced options and involve them in planning or preparing meals, as they're more likely to embrace healthy choices when they have a role in the process.

Prioritize Physical Activity

After extended periods of lounging indoors - and likely an overdose of screen time - children need movement to burn energy and boost their moods. Coordinate outdoor play and family walks. If the weather isn't cooperative, move around indoors with hide-and-seek and dance sessions.

Physical activity not only supports health but also helps regulate sleep and behavior.

Strategically Provide Choices

When children have a voice, they are more likely to stay engaged and stick to their routines. As your child settles back into familiar patterns, this is an ideal moment to assess where you can ease your grip just enough to support their growing autonomy. This doesn't mean relinquishing full decision-making power; rather, it's about offering structured, intentional choices that help them feel a sense of control over their day.

You know your child best, so you can determine when to be flexible. For example, it may not matter if they change into their pajamas right after dinner or just before bed but shifting when they go to the bathroom could completely disrupt their routine and, in turn, your day.

Model Behavior

Children learn by example and they are always watching their parents. If you reestablish and consistently maintain your own routines - healthy meals, quality

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sleep and physical activity among them - your child is more likely to follow suit. Make it a family effort rather than a set of rules imposed on them, and make it fun. To help routines stick, consider sticker charts to track progress and incentivize independence and accountability.

Resetting routines isn't about perfection; it's about creating a supportive environment where children feel secure and prepared for what's ahead. With patience, consistency and a positive attitude, you can help your child start the new year on the right foot.

For more parenting guidance and insights, including a blog and webinar series, visit the Parent Resource Center at GoddardSchool.com.

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