



## Routines

Your young toddler's growing independence and changing behavior may be affecting very aspect of your child's life, from breakfast to bedtime. Daily routines that were once easy are getting difficult and stressful. Now your child fights going to bed, struggles when getting dressed, and refuses to eat certain foods! Your child's need to do things independently and exert control can clash with your needs and your toddler's need to be attached to you. Toddlers' limited abilities can also clash with their desire to do new things. How can you both survive and thrive during the toddler years?

One practice to adopt as a family is establishing family routines and family traditions. Toddlers love predictability and to know what will happen next. Research has shown that family routines and family traditions help children develop inner strength and resiliency. Toddlers respond well to routines developed for mealtimes, bath times and bedtimes. Special family routines such as special ways of saying good-bye and hello help toddlers cope with separations. Regular family time and traditions like taking walks, playing games or reading aloud give children positive learning experiences and give them family history share and cherish.

- Try to take some time with your partner to discuss the role of routines and family time in your family.
- Why do you think your toddler needs and enjoys routines.
- What routines or special family traditions do you have as a family
- What family traditions or routines do you remember from your own childhood?
- What ones would you like to continue
- Which ones might not have been positive for you?
- What family routines can you create that would help you and your child.

Developed for Healthy Steps<sup>SM</sup> for Young Children by BUSM<sup>®</sup>: Department of Pediatrics, Boston Medical Center



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