

Getting Back on Track

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Let's face it, summer is fun, but many parents struggle with getting back into their daily routines. Children become accustomed to staying up late, watching T.V. for hours a day and not to mention the bad eating habits. So, how do we get "back on track?" Here are three simple steps to help you get started:

Implement the "Three R's" of Memory Making

1. **Rituals** – These are regular formal events, such as religious ceremony or informal events, such as "movie" night. Kraehmer says that these activities "provide emotional security and reinforce family bonds".
2. **Routines** – Consistency assists children to thrive and facilitate children's developing feelings of sameness and security. A simple routine during bedtime can help a child sleep more easily.
3. **The Ridiculous** – These are everyday activities with a twist. Do a normal activity such as checking the kid's rooms dressed up as the "Room Fairy". Kids get a kick out of this. — Source: *Time Well Spent: A Father's Advice for Establishing a Lifetime of Closeness With Your Child*. Prentice Hall Press.

Avoiding Television Wars

As I mentioned above, children watch more T.V. during the summer than we would like them to. So, to help begin the weaning process, try giving children T.V. tickets.

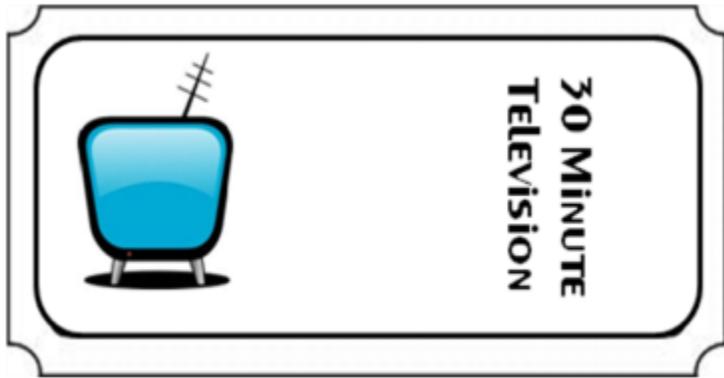
1. On a weekly basis, give each child 20 T.V. tickets (that's 6 hrs total) or whatever you find to be acceptable for your home.
2. Each ticket can be used for 30 min of T.V. time.
3. At the end of the week, any remaining tickets can be cashed in for an agreed allowance (.25 cents or more).
4. Inform your child that you can still veto certain programs. The ticket represents TIME.

Make copies of the ticket below:

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Homework Tips

Set the Environment - Your child needs a space that is quiet and well lit. This means turning off the television or background music. Make all the supplies available in one place. If your child does his homework inside his room, help him organize it so that he has all supplies readily at hand.

Consistency – Try to give your child the proper time to do his homework. Stick to the scheduled homework time as this helps your child mentally prepare and gives him a sense of control.

Motivate – Help your child get excited about homework. This means you need to change your language and help your child have the right attitude about what he is doing. Make it fun!

Lead by Example – When your child is doing homework, model the same skills he is learning. For example: if your child needs to read, read a good book. If your child is doing math, balance the family checkbook. This will give him a great example of how the skills he is currently learning will be used as an adult.

Encourage – If you notice that your child is getting frustrated, assist him, but don't do the work for him. Offer words like, "That looks challenging, but I'm sure you'll do fine," "I can see you are putting a lot of effort into this."

Allow Breaks – It's okay to take short mental breaks. Provide your child with options, such as taking a walk, stretching, sit outside and close your eyes and take a deep breath.

Good Habits – Tell your child that being efficient and having good study skills are not inherited, but rather learned. Help him plan how to make good use of his time. For example, doing the most important or the most difficult stuff first will give him great satisfaction.

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