

Cheat Sheet

Parenting is overwhelming at times – and whoever said having two was ‘easy’ is a liar. It’s mostly twice the noise and twice the mess and significantly less time to breathe and be yourself.

Meal times seem to be especially triggering, especially in the morning when you have to be out the door at a specific time. Here are a few tips that can help ease the stress...

1. Routine

You may think you have a morning routine, but do you *really*? Does everything happen in the exact same order every day? 1) get dressed 2) have breakfast 3) have a moment together 4) brush teeth 5) get shoes – coat – hat on (in that order every time)?

The actual order doesn’t matter – this is your family, your routine. And I’m not talking about timings. I’m talking about process. The second you deviate from a set order, you give your children the cue that it’s ok not to do the thing you’re asking, because sometimes that’s not how it happens... GET A ROUTINE. Make a list, put it on the wall. Stick to it.

2) Boundaries

If your kids are not listening or not behaving in a way you want (shouting, throwing, not doing as they are asked) use a calm, firm voice and the [‘stop’ sign](#) – say ‘That is not acceptable.’ No judgement, no threats, no consequences, no explanations (because...) don’t get into the details. Just ‘Stop. This shouting is unacceptable’ and hold the hand, hold a pause. They will ignore this for the first 50 times you do it. But persist. Be consistent. Stay calm. The message will get through.

3) Connection

Your kids need to know you are there. Especially first thing in the morning, and after a day in childcare/school. They haven’t seen you, then need to connect. They will probably do this by being a monumental pain in the butt, because a) it’s effective and b) they are tired and hungry and have a lot of stress and anxiety to unload. Can you grab a book, put on a tune, find a short tv programme to watch (This is [my recommendation](#) for kids of all ages) and just sit together for 5-10 minutes and connect.