

JACK'S CORNER

If you missed the presentation entitled “The Benefits of Routine,” a summary is below:

All children require and benefit from routine. The amount and frequency of routine a child needs is a function of temperament and varies with each individual child. Before the pragmatic list of routine benefits, I want to start with an existential construct for understanding behaviors and motivation in children.

All non-organic behaviors in children can be understood within the categories of three deep longings delineated in the following questions: “What do I need to do to find love? What do I need to do to be safe? What do I need to do to have purpose and meaning?” Of course, children don’t walk around saying these questions to themselves, but if their longings could be summarized into questions, the above three would be accurate. Children’s behaviors are a function of them trying to obtain love, security and meaning. That said, what routines do you as parents intentionally create and practice that answer the three questions? If none of your routines fit into these three categories, I would encourage you to start some new routines. In other words, what routines make your child feel loved, feel safe and have meaning and purpose?

For the pragmatic parent, many routines have wonderful, pragmatic benefits! Routines:

1. Produce stability in the child’s life
2. Lower anxiety
3. Build self-confidence and independence
4. Improve planning skills
5. Create a “buy-in” in the child’s motivation
6. Decrease power struggles with parents
7. Teach the value of structure in life
8. Establish good habits

9. Increase responsible behaviors
10. Improve efficiency
11. Decrease parents' stress

Keep those routines coming and add some that fulfill the three existential needs listed above! Also, don't forget to make some room for spontaneity and surprise. Otherwise, life is dull. Spontaneity and surprise help children learn to handle the unexpected...an essential life-skill.

Jack Lipski, M.A.
Christian Counselor