

Creating structure: Why it's important and how to create it



What is structure and why is it so important?

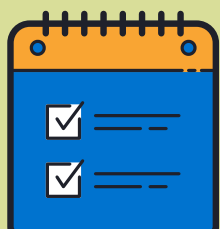
Structure creates a predictable and organized environment for our kids.

It can be anything from a daily routine, or as simple as a few key touchpoints each day.

It helps kids feel safe and calm and lets them know what to expect and can help prevent triggers.

Creating structure can help kids who live with extra challenges. People with trauma benefit from predictability. Grounding rhythms help with ADHD and visual schedules can be great for kids with ASD or FASD.

Work on building structure day by day



Simplicity and consistency are key.

Start small:

Set a wake-up time and bedtime and stick to it. Then, once you've done those for a few days, work your way up to bigger goals.

Keep it flexible and positive



Stay flexible and focus on the emotional needs of your kids.

Be sure to encourage and praise your kids' accomplishments, even if they seem small. Stay positive even if they miss a day: "That's okay, we'll try again tomorrow."

Additional tips specific to COVID-19



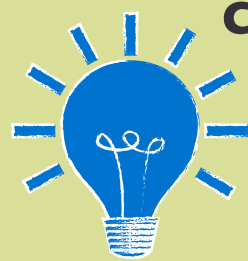
Kids with trauma, attachment issues, or who are dealing with grief and loss may regress at first.

Creating a structured routine can help them trust their environment again, but it may take time!

You don't have to figure it all out now. Maybe your kids need twice as much time to transition between activities, or bath time works best after breakfast instead of before bed. Be flexible and do what works for you.

You are not alone! Make sure to ask for help when you need it. Keep connected with your partner, friends, or family. Reach out to one of our Family Support Workers if you need to talk.

Easy ideas to create structure



Try writing down a schedule so your kids can see what is planned for the day.

Include fun things (playtime and snack break), and things they're expected to do anyway (chores).

Set daily targets and have motivational quotes to enthuse your kids. Display them where your kids can see them easily.

Schedule times to connect to friends and family digitally. Set up online chats or video calls to stay connected.

Try daily affirmations:

- ✓ I appreciate this extra time to spend with my family.
- ✓ I am excited about new experiences this will bring.

Find affirmations that fit your unique family.

Bottom line

- ✓ Find what works for you—every family is different and it may take some trial and error to get it right for you.
- ✓ You are not school or daycare, so don't try to be! It's okay to be a little more creative with learning and branch out from "traditional" methods.

Need advice or someone to talk to?

Contact our Family Support Workers:
bcadoption.com/support



Adoptive Families
Association of BC