SESSION

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Routines and rewards

NAME: ....

CHECKLIST SESSION 4
Routines & Rewards

Pre-Session planning list

To do	To buy	To prepare	Kids Matter resources
Reminder message to parents	Refreshments	Post-it notes and pen	Guest booklets (including extra copies of Sessions 1, 2 and 3)
Double check room is booked	Flowers	Kettle, mugs, water, spoons, plastic cups, plates	Group & Crèche register
Sticky labels for names	Stickers	Table cloth, napkins & tissues	Sticker chart
Pray! And prompt others to pray for you		Pen & paper	
Crèche room and team booked			

On the day:
- Prepare tablecloth, snacks and flowers on the main table
- Tea and coffee on a separate table
- Offer a tea, coffee and water
- Record attendance and details of guests in accordance with your church/charity GDPR guidelines

Remember: Smile, be positive, be ready to share your good and bad experiences of parenting children of this age!

My goals in facilitating this session:
- To highlight challenges and positive responses from Session 3
- Parent/carer understands the benefits of routines
- Parent/carer learns how to use screen time specifically and for limited periods of time
- Parent/carer understands how to use appropriate rewards to encourage positive behaviour rather than punitive measures in response to poor behaviour

Review of Session 3

Ask the group what they remember of the last session.

Last week we looked at play, encouragement and listening. The session content reflected two of the key building blocks in the illustration, to the right, showing what children need. Play is part of the building block 'play, explore and learn' and encouragement and listening is part of the building block 'feeling heard and understood'.

Q: Were you able to use any of the ideas we talked about last week?

Q: We are halfway through the programme, how are you feeling about being part of the group?

Today we are going to look at Routines and rewards. Routines are part of the building block which gives a child guidance and helps them feel secure. Routines often relate to the basic needs a child has such as food and sleep.

What children need

Guidance & boundaries

Feel heard & understood

Play, explore & learn

Love & belonging

Basic needs met

Routines

Q: What do we think about routines?

Q: How can having routines around family life help our children?

Routines help children feel secure, understand how the world works and provide structure to their day. Routines also help keep family life predictable, calm, and organised. Children without routines tend to cry a lot, be fussy and sleep badly at night.

We all have activities that we need to do regularly, such as going to school or nursery in the morning, having meals and getting children to bed. These can be stressful if we are under time pressure.

Morning Routines

Q: What are mornings like in your home? Let's look at the list below for some ideas to make things a little easier. *Try and encourage discussion and examples around each.*

- Leave enough time: it's our responsibility to allow enough time in the morning so it's not stressful, especially if children are learning a new skill, e.g putting shoes on by themselves, and don't forget to encourage them!
- Try to make it fun: 'races', 'beat the clock', use a timer, play some music etc.

(Give examples)

- Plan ahead: do what we can the night before
- Be clear about expectations e.g. do we want our children to get dressed first or eat breakfast first?
- Be consistent with the message

Mealtimes

Let's think about mealtimes.
Q: What are mealtimes like in your family? Do you have any mealtime routines?

Why eat together?

Q: What do you think are the benefits of eating together?

- With regular meals, children are less likely to have hunger melt-downs, which can help to prevent challenging behaviour.
- Regular meals and less snacking means children are less overweight and healthier.
- It's a chance for us to bond and chat with our children; we can talk about each other's interests, and help our children think through what's going on in the world around them.

Q: What can make mealtimes more enjoyable? *Use your own examples.*
If appropriate you can signpost to Change for Life NHS website which has lots of recipes and healthy eating ideas: www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes

Naps and bedtime

Q: Do your children have nap or bedtime routines?
Q: What are the benefits of having a bedtime routine?
E.g. Preventing behavioural problems, time for parents to recover at the end of the day, ensuring our children have enough sleep.

It's important that our children get enough sleep, to help their brain develop, their body to grow and to avoid emotional meltdowns. Having enough sleep will help them concentrate, and learn and allow them to be their best. Establishing bedtime routines early on will help good sleep habits in the future.

Recommended hours of sleep for children

These times are for a 24 hour period and include nap times.
(Encourage them to look at list below and see how they are doing with their children.)

	Age	Time asleep including naps
Newborn	0 - 3 months	14 - 17 hours
Infant	4 - 11 months	12 - 15 hours
Toddler	1 - 2 years old	11 - 14 hours
Preschool	3 - 5 years old	10 - 13 hours
School age	6 - 13 years old	9 - 11 hours

(NHS guidelines & National Sleep Foundation)

Helping our children sleep well

Q: How can we help our children get ready for sleep?

Having a calm routine such as bath time then story time can help our children get ready for bed. Rough and tumble games, sugary snacks and screen times can all raise energy; try and avoid these before bed.

Guests might talk about sleeping in children's beds, or musical beds through the night or partners splitting up to sleep with different children. Aim to emphasise the importance of a consistent, calm routine. Ideally everyone in their own bed but not exclusively.

Reading or listening to a story with our children at bedtime provides us with a chance to talk to them and relax with them at the end of the day. This can also be a good time to talk about any worries or concerns they have, as they feel safe and relaxed.

If literacy is an issue then talk about alternatives like listening to story podcasts, or sharing picture books together.

The earlier we can help our children find a good sleep routine, the easier it is to establish. It's beneficial for us to have some time in the evening to ourselves. This link might be helpful if you are having trouble establishing a good sleep routine:

https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/

Other routines

We may also need routines to help our older children do their homework and jobs around the house. Having a regular time each day, e.g. after school, or after dinner, can make it easier for them to be successful. Including our children in the planning can motivate them to become more responsible.

Q: How do you get your children to do their homework?

Q: What happens to routines at weekends/holidays?

Q: What about routines at other family members' homes?

Q: What could help?

Being clear with our children about our expectations helps them understand what our aim is. 'This morning, I would like you to help tidy up and play with your brother (or whatever we need them to do) and then we will go to the park.'

Q: How do we get our children to do the numerous daily tasks we need them to do? E.g. Getting dressed, brushing teeth, getting coats on.

Q: Does nagging work?

Tools to help routines go more smoothly:

a) **Clear instructions**: 'I would like you to put your pyjamas on now.'

b) **Give a choice of two options** (not whether they do it or not): 'Would you like to put your pyjamas on by yourself or shall I help you?'

c) **Encourage** each positive step towards the goal: 'Well done, you managed the sleeves by yourself!'

Q: When have you tried using encouragement or choice? How did it go?

(Contrast this to nagging or threatening.)

Which routines are going well in my family?

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What routines do I need to talk about and agree with my parenting teammate?

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A key part of our daily life involves our own screen use and that of our children so let's talk about screens.
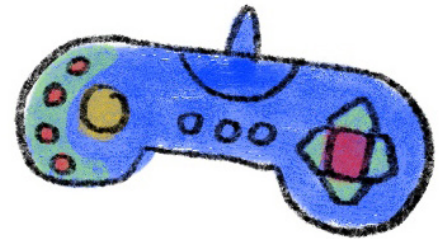
Let's talk about screens

Screens are a big part of our lives now, whether it is our phones, game consoles, tablets or TV.

Q: What are the different uses of screen time (e.g. video chats, playing games, social media or using educational apps)? *Facilitate discussion of all the different ways we use screens.*

There are different ways of using screens: sometimes to chat with family or friends and at other times to play or to learn.

Q: What are some good uses of screen time? When can screen time become a problem? *(Lead group in a brainstorm of Helpful/Unhelpful. Aim is to get group to think about overuse or inappropriate games/apps.)*

Helpful	Unhelpful
Connecting with family/friends/others on video and social media	Sitting in front of ANY screen for too long can lead children to: • Not get enough exercise • Be hyperactive/aggressive afterwards • Have trouble sleeping • Have difficulty concentrating • Lose interest in other things like play/sport/ helping out/friends • Lose social skills or not develop them
Gives little ones who are very active a chance to have a break	
Educational games can help with learning, especially if we're involved	
Children can explore being creative (e.g. drawing/building etc)	Unsupervised access to inappropriate apps/ games/social media platforms can be harmful to children by: • Exposing them to adult content too early • Putting them at risk of grooming • Giving them nightmares or worries • Putting them at risk of cyberbullying
Interactive games played with friends can help children feel connected	
Gives us a break when we need it!	

Q: What stands out to you about this?

Screen time habits develop quickly so think about how much time should be spent on screens.

Q: How equipped do you feel in the area of internet safety? We have information at the back of this booklet on these issues for you to read. *Direct their attention to information sheet 'Keeping our children safe online' at the back of the booklet. Allow conversation if needed.*

> **Remember:** Activities on a screen can seem more fun, but in fact building memories, learning and playing together are what children remember. The World Health Organization even recommends no passive screen time at all for babies under 2 years.

Ending screen time well

It can be really hard to stop our children's screen time no matter how long they've been on it! Knowing how to end screen time well is important.

Q: How can we manage/limit screen time without having big arguments?

Q: What happens when it is time for our children to finish screen time?

Some ideas:

- Giving our children a time frame helps them to end screen time when we ask them to, e.g. 'in five minutes', 'at the end of this episode', 'when this round is over,' or using a timer they can see.
- Sitting with our children for the last few minutes, and watching with them, can help bridge the gap back into the 'real world'.
- Suggesting an alternative activity, e.g. playing a game or going to the park can distract them if they are feeling frustrated about having to end screen time.
- For older children you can ask 'where is a good place for you to stop within the next 5 minutes?'

> Stopping screen time 1 hour before bed allows children's brain to calm down before going to sleep.

👍 Rewards

Q: What's the difference between a reward and a bribe?

Rewards can be a good way of encouraging new behaviours or getting children to try difficult or necessary activities for the first time. Rewards can help children in the short term so that new positive behaviours become habits, e.g. using a potty. Don't forget that positive words and attention are a really powerful way of encouraging our children too.

Rewards are not the same as bribes! Rewards are good for our children; bribes aren't.

Look at the chart together.

Rewards	Bribes
Are earned for good behaviour	Are given to stop bad behaviour
Make children feel proud of themselves	Make children feel powerful and encourage manipulation
Are planned ahead of time and controlled by parents	Are reactive and delivered in frustration
Are adult-led – we decide when (and if) a reward has been earned	Mean the child is in control – makes the parent resort to negotiating to achieve better behaviour

Q: What is your experience of bribes and rewards at the moment?
Read out the following statements and discuss together whether it is a bribe or reward:

- 'If you stop screaming you can have a packet of sweets.' *(Bribe)*
- 'We can get an ice-cream after shopping, if you behave well.' *(Reward)*
- 'You can have some screen time when you have finished your homework.' *(Reward)*
- 'Stop fighting with your brother and I will buy you that toy.' *(Bribe)*

Be aware that bribes can stop the tricky behaviour in the moment but the problem behaviour will likely worsen over time.

Q: What sort of rewards do you use with your children?

Examples of rewards for children under 10:
- An extra story at bedtime
- Choose a meal/pudding one night this week
- Extra one-to-one time with parent
- Invite a friend over to play
- 10-minute dance party
- Extra 20-minutes outdoor play

We can also be spontaneous with our children: "Wow, I'm so impressed you've been getting ready for school on time lately. I think we'll go to the playground this afternoon to celebrate."

Encouraging specific positive behaviours or new skills

Sometimes, for specific skills to be learned, sticker charts can be helpful in addition to lots of encouraging words, particularly with children aged 3-7.

Sticker chart:

Q: Has anyone ever used a sticker chart? How did you find it?
Show the group the sticker chart and stickers, talk through the points below to succeed in doing one.

Key points to communicate about charts during your discussion:
- Be specific: start with stickers/points for one behaviour we want to encourage
- Be very clear what the goal is (e.g. staying in own bed for at least 3 nights a week)
- Stay positive and encouraging
- Only set realistic goals given our child's developmental stage
- Work towards a small prize (this shouldn't be expensive), e.g. after 5 or 7 days, child earns 10-minutes more play time or favourite treat
- Sticker charts work well if done just for 2-3 weeks to get a new behaviour going
- With older children (age 7-10), we can do points instead of stickers, and can give them for broader goals e.g. signs of independence
- Eventually reduce the sticker chart and replace with encouragement; give it a break, and then try again with new challenges after a few weeks
- NEVER take away stickers or points if they mess up!

Give out sticker charts and stickers.

Using a 'pasta jar'

Having a family 'pasta jar' can be useful for encouraging positive behaviour and teamwork. Parents add a 'pasta shape' to a jam jar every time they notice behaviour they want to encourage, e.g. kindness, sharing, tidying up, getting dressed. When the jam jar is full, everyone gets a treat. You could choose something from the 'playing' list of Session 3! (Use big pasta and a small jar.)

Q: Which behaviour or routine do you want to be noticing and rewarding this week?

Remember: Rewards are helpful tools to build positive habits. Rewards should work alongside all of the other areas of parenting we have discussed - play, communication, expressing love, encouragement. All of these together work to give our children a strong sense of self-confidence and security.

Encourage everyone to write down one thing they are going to try related to this session.

📋 **This week I will try to ...**

....

📝 **Summing up...**

Today we have talked about the importance of routines as well as rewards. We looked at rewarding without bribing. Next week we will think about family rules and consequences. All of these are part of the building block around guidance which children need to feel safe and secure.

Q: What is one thing you have learned from all our discussions today?

At the end of the session:
- *Look at Top Tips*
- *Encourage them all to come back and thank them for their contribution today*
- *Say something about what you enjoyed or learned today*
- *Offer food to them all to take away*
- *Don't rush off! Be available for anyone who wants to chat*

After the session:
- *Write down any great quotes you heard today*
- *Send messages to anyone who didn't make the session*

Safe Online

There are lots of helpful websites out there to help parents keep their children safe online.

Here's a selection from two great organizations, Childnet and Safe Internet.

Supporting Young People Online

Info and advice on supporting young people online, and great interactive resources for our children to use to learn about safety.
www.childnet.come/resources/supporting-young-people-online

Online Gaming

Advice and info on supporting children and young people playing games online.
www.childnet.com/online-gaming

Young People and Social Networking Sites

Helps parents to understand the positive and creative ways young people are using social networking spaces, and points out the potential risks of using these sites, and ways to minimize these risks.
www.childnet.com/sns

CEOP helps any child or young person under the age of 18 who is being pressured, forced or tricked into taking part in sexual activity of any kind. This can be something that has taken place either online or in 'the real world', or both. The CEOP Safety Centre has clear information and advice on what can be reported to CEOP, the reporting process and what will happen if you do decide to make a report. You can visit the CEOP Safety Centre www.ceop.police.uk/ and make a report directly to CEOP by clicking the Click CEOP button.

If your child is experiencing online bullying or something else online has worried you, they can talk to Childline at any time on 0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk

Online gaming reviews from **Common Sense Media** help parents to assess the suitability of games that their children want to play online.
https://www.commonsensemedia.org

Routines

Routines help me keep my family calm and organised!

Mornings / Getting to school
- Do what I can the night before or get up earlier
- 'Beat the clock' games to encourage my child
- Make it fun!

Mealtimes
- Eat together
- Cook together
- Model good eating habits e.g. sit down with my children
- TV off and phones away

Helping my children follow routines

Give clear instructions: Tell my children what I want them to do

Be patient! Wait and give them a chance to do what I've asked, don't start nagging!

Give my child a timeframe to do something in (before lunch, or in next half hour) instead of straight away

Encourage their effort, not ability, for every step in the right direction

REWARDS

Rewards encourage my children to make good choices and behave well. I can use rewards as well as lots of praise and positive attention.

Rewards	Bribes
Are earned for good behaviour	Are given to stop bad behaviour
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KIDS MATTER