



# Helping Your Child Develop Good Daily Habits

Developing good daily habits and coping skills can help your child lead a healthy, balanced lifestyle and manage their feelings. This can help them buffer the negative effects of distress.

### ✓ Things You Can Do



1 Affirm your child when they engage in good daily habits. Role model these habits yourself too.



2 Use a planner to keep track of daily activities.



3 Even during hectic periods, encourage your child to set aside time for rest and exercise.

### 4 important areas in our lives in which to build healthy daily habits:

#### ① Nutrition



**Have a balanced diet of nutritious food.**

- Involving your child in preparing nutritious meals can make them more willing to eat healthily.
- Limit the number of snacks available at home. Opt for water as a default beverage or choose beverages that are lower in sugar.

💬 “What do you think about setting a rule for how often we should eat fast food?”

#### ② Exercise



**Have an average of 1 hour of physical activity per day across a week, at moderate or vigorous intensity.**

- This can be as simple as walking home instead of taking the bus.

💬 “What kind of exercise do you enjoy? How can we make this a habit?”

#### ③ Sleep



**Have a regular sleep routine and healthy pre-sleep rituals.**

- Avoid screen use at least 1 hour before bedtime.
- If your child has difficulty falling asleep due to overstimulation, they can try a non-stimulating activity like listening to soothing music.

💬 “What should we do or not do before bedtime?”

#### ④ Digital



**Have a healthy balance of age-appropriate screen use and offline activities that are important for your child's development.**

When deciding how much screen use is appropriate for your child, consider your child's age and needs to strike a healthy balance. Children aged 7-12 should have consistent screen time limits.

- Have regular conversations with your child to better understand what they do online. Is it school work or are they engaging in recreational activities?
- Discuss and develop a timetable with your child to moderate the time spent on recreational screen use. Parental control settings can be used to monitor and limit screen use as agreed with your child.

💬 “What do you think is a reasonable amount of time to spend on your phone for leisure?”



Read the *Singapore Physical Activity Guidelines* published by Sport Singapore and Health Promotion Board (HPB) for preschoolers, school children, and youths (pages 17-20).



For more tips on sleeping well, visit HealthHub's MindSG.





# Setting Goals with Your Child



As you communicate with your child, they are likely to share their hopes for what they want to achieve, as well as their challenges and worries. Setting goals together using the **S.M.A.R.T.** framework can guide them towards their goals, while strengthening your parent-child relationship.

S.M.A.R.T.



### Tips

- 1 Ask what they hope to achieve before offering suggestions.
- 2 Guide your child to set **Specific** goals.
- 3 Make sure progress towards the goal is **Measurable**.
- 4 Guide your child using specific steps to set **Achievable** goals.
- 5 If your child is imposing high expectations on themselves, guide them to set **Realistic** goals.
- 6 Make sure the goals are **Time-bound**.

### Sample Conversations



1 You've been on the track and field team for a while. How are you feeling about the upcoming year?

It would be nice if I could win a medal at the National School Games.



2 That's an amazing goal! What's a good timing to get a medal for the 1.6 km run event?

Maybe under...8 minutes?



3 Currently, your timing is around 8 minutes 30 seconds. What do you need to do to be on track towards reaching your goal?

I think that I need to cut my timing down by 5 seconds every two weeks.



4 So, you will be training every week then?

Hmm...I will probably do interval trainings twice a week at my target speed, and maybe endurance and strength training once a week.



Wow! 3 days of training sounds intense. 5 Maybe you should discuss this with your team coach to see if she thinks this plan is feasible? 6 You have half a year until the competition. Let's make sure you have a good plan that can help you meet your goal.



# Supporting Your Child When They Are Feeling Anxious

Some level of stress can be motivating and helps us better prepare for situations. Feeling anxious is a normal reaction to stress. However, it is good to find out if your child is coping well. Try using conversation starters such as, "You seem anxious. Let's talk about it."

If your child expresses that they are having difficulty coping with anxiety, you can try these tips:



**Encourage your child to take slow, deep breaths.**

Imagine your lungs are two balloons filled with air. Breathe in slowly and deeply to expand your lungs, and breathe out slowly to let all the air out.



Acknowledge your child's struggles and **encourage them to express their worries** through drawing or writing if they find it difficult to talk about it.

Sometimes, it is hard to talk about our troubles. Let's try drawing or writing down your worries instead.



**Break down the situation with your child** to understand the cause of their fear or anxiety.

Could you share with me which part of the <situation> scares you?



**Discuss possible ways to approach the situation** while reminding them to continue trying other options if their chosen option does not work.

Every attempt is a learning experience. What are the different solutions that we can explore?



**Guide your child to focus on what they can control** and let go of what they cannot control.

This problem feels large and overwhelming. Which parts of it are under your control and you can do something to solve it? Clear your mind of the worries outside your control by writing them down and crossing them out.



**Role model and share with your child how you cope with your stress and anxiety.**

When I approach a scary situation, I start with addressing the simplest part of the problem.



**Take a step back** and let your child figure things out for themselves while remaining close so they can reach out for help if they need it.

It sounds like you have a workable solution in mind. Let me know if you need any help with it.



**Encourage your child to try new things**, and assure them that they have your support.

Let's try <new thing> together! I am here to support you.



# Giving Your Child S.P.A.C.E. to Build Resilience



**Resilience is not something that you are either born with or not. It is something that everyone can develop and grow.** Give your child space to find ways to solve their problems, while remaining available to provide help if and when they reach out. This will help your child see their family as a safe and reliable source of support.

Give your child **S.P.A.C.E.** by trying the following tips:

### Tips

#### 1 **Support**

- Let your child know that you are there for them
- Be willing to listen to your child

#### 2 **Problem-solve**

- Guide your child in solving problems together

#### 3 **Affirm**

- Affirm your child's strengths and effort
- Provide your child with words of encouragement

#### 4 **Cheer**

- Cheer your child on for the effort that they make
- Share inspirational stories of how you or others had overcome challenges

#### 5 **Empower**

- Let your child make decisions
- Encourage your child to voice their ideas, and to carry out plans that they have made

### Sample Conversations



3 It's normal to feel nervous when you have to speak in front of so many people. I'm proud of you for trying your best. If this is making you feel down, you can always share that with me. I'll always be here for you. 2 Instead of worrying about what has already happened, let's think of how you can better prepare for future presentations! 1 Is there anything that I can do to help?

1 Can I practise for my next presentation with you as my audience?



Yes, you can! 4 Let's take baby steps towards your goal and learn along the way.

I think I might also want to try preparing a speech, and timing myself to ensure that I keep to the time limit.



5 They both sound like good ideas. Trying different methods is a good way to see what works best for you.