



Laugh and LEARN

March 2025 Parent Packet

Healthy Bedtime Routine for Children

Sleep is an important part of everyone's health. Having a regular bedtime routine helps you sleep better and feel more rested in the morning. Here are some practical steps to creating a healthy bedtime routine.

Turn off screens. Turn off TV, video games, and phones at least 30 minutes before bed. The light from screens can make it hard to sleep.

Set out things for tomorrow. Lay out your clothes and pack your backpack, so you are ready for the next day. Knowing what you are going to wear reduces time needed to get ready and can help you feel more relaxed starting your day.

Brush your teeth. Make sure to brush your teeth and floss to keep them clean and healthy.

Put on pajamas. Wearing clean comfortable and cozy clothes for bed can help you sleep.

Bedtime story or prayer. Spend 10-15 minutes doing something calming, like reading a story, listening to soft music, or being grateful for something in your day.

Say goodnight. Turn off the lights and close your eyes.

References:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).(2024). About Sleep.

Source: David Weisenhorn, Ph.D., Specialist for Parenting and Child Development



April is Stress Awareness Month

April is stress awareness month. More than 50% of Americans report experiencing stress. Between having to juggle things such as our professional lives and our personal lives, we all deal with so much stress. There are many things, including work, child care, and money issues that can add stress to our lives. Why is stress bad? Stress can lead to poor mental health and can affect our physical health as well and can cause things such as:

- Anxiety and depression
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Trouble sleeping

Is all stress bad? No, not all stress is bad. Examples of “good” stress can be things such as starting a new job, starting a family, or learning something new.

How can I reduce or manage my stress? There are plenty of things you can do to better manage or reduce your stress including:

- Setting routines
- Practicing mindfulness
- Finding new hobbies
- Spending quality time in nature
- Spending quality time with loved ones
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So, this stress awareness month, take some time to assess your personal stress and think about ways in which you can reduce your stress.

Reference: <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/health>

<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/body>

<https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/news-releases/annual-poll-adults-express-increasing-anxiousness>

<https://www.vcuhealth.org/news/the-ways-chronic-stress-can-impact-your-body>

O'Connor, D. B., Thayer, J. F., & Vedhara, K. (2021). Stress and health: A review of Psychobiological Processes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72(1), 663–688. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-062520-122331>

Source: Dr. Natese Dockery, Clinical Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for Mental Health and Well-being

Next Play Date

Friday, April 18 | 9:00AM
Grayson County Extension Office

April will be the last in person Laugh + Learn until October 2025!

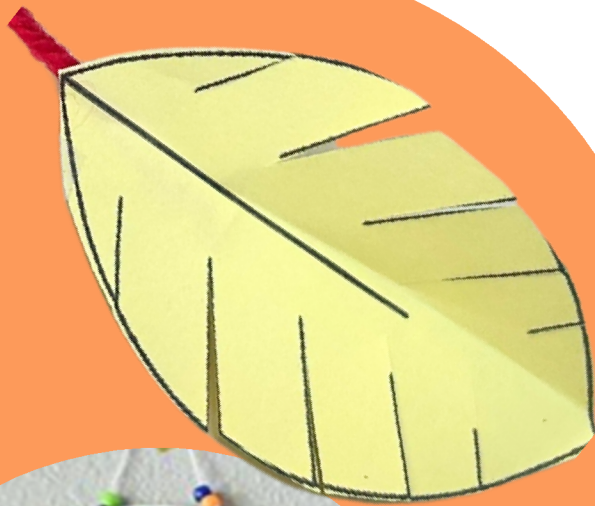
DIY Dream Catcher

Dream Catchers are originally from the Ojibwe people (Native American Tribe). They believed that the web of the dream catcher would trap bad dreams and let good dreams come through. And the bad dreams were destroyed when the sun shines on the web. Dream catchers are hung over your bed to protect you from bad dreams!

Supplies:

- Paper plate
- Yarn
- Scissors
- Tape
- Markers, crayons, etc.
- Feathers (real or paper)
- Optional: beads, stickers, other decorations.

Paper Feather Example



Directions:

1. Use scissors to cut out center of paper plate.
2. Decorate your plate (now with a hole in it!)
3. Measure strands of yarn to fit across the hole.
4. Tape ends of yarn to back of plate to hold them in place. Use as many strands as you like, making a web design. Leave enough yarn for the bottom strands and a hanger.
5. Use remaining yarn to create strands at bottom of dream catcher and a loop to hang it on the wall.
6. Use the feather shaped, colorful pieces of paper to make feathers. Have a grown up help cut a slice along each line on the edges of the feather (don't cut the center line!).
7. Use tape to secure your paper feathers to the bottom strands of yarn.
8. Hang your dream catcher above your bed and have sweet dreams!



