

Parent Tip #20

Maintain Routines

- **Sleep/wake routines:** Maintaining physical health is key for all family members and ensuring proper sleep is an important contributor. Sleep disturbances are more common in individuals with autism, thus extra attention may be required to support good sleep hygiene and maintain bedtime and waking routines (see more <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sleep>).
- **Household chores/daily living skills:** Participating in structured household chores and routines is a recommended strategy to support children and young adults coping with stress related to COVID-19 (https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/factsheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf). Individuals with autism and other "learning differences" may need additional supports, such as a task analysis, to be able to participate in and/or complete these activities.
- **Expanding the use of a visual schedule, and using one more regularly throughout the day, may help facilitate participation in activities at home and reduce anxiety.** Many caregivers use elements of a visual schedule already (e.g. a calendar on the refrigerator, a list of errand locations, a photo of which therapist is coming to visit) and these can be extended for use across the day. The format and length of the schedule may vary based on the individual's needs, and several examples are included.

Adapted from (AFIRM) is an extension of the National Professional Development Center (NPDC) on ASD

