



Tip Number One: Children LOVE routines

Ask any teacher and they'll tell you that the vast majority of children love to have a routine and a schedule. It makes them feel safe, they know where they are and what's about to happen and it allows them to concentrate on the here and now rather than think about what's coming next.

It's the same for lots of adults too. Have you ever been on a training course with work where the person leading the day forgets to tell you when the coffee breaks and lunch are? If so, you probably spent a good chunk of the day wondering where the next coffee is coming from. That's exactly how it is with children. If they can see paint at the back of the classroom, they want to know when they will be doing art, otherwise they'll spend a good chunk of their day wondering when they'll be let loose with a brush. So let them know what the day looks like at the start.

We're not saying that you need to put a strict timetable in place, but a getting into a regular pattern might help in a number of ways. If your children know that they're expected to do some exercise first thing, then do some work for an hour and then they'll get a break, it is likely to be easier to get them to sit down and make a start. It would also help distinguish between a weekday and the weekend given that no-one will be going out for a while and your days may start to look similar to each other. One child made me laugh last week when she asked if she'd have to wear school uniform for kitchen-table school. I said no, but then thought it would at least help her know that this is a Wednesday not a Saturday!

A regular schedule might also help you manage your own work alongside your children's needs, e.g. if you know that you're going to be doing something with your children from, say, 8.30—10am and then they'll do something low-key whilst you concentrate on work, it might alleviate your stress too. That brings us to another thing... most children (before they hit adolescence anyway) concentrate much better in the morning than the afternoon, so if you want them to do two hours of work a day, it's better to schedule that in the morning if at all possible.

Hope that helps in some way. Another teacher tip next week!