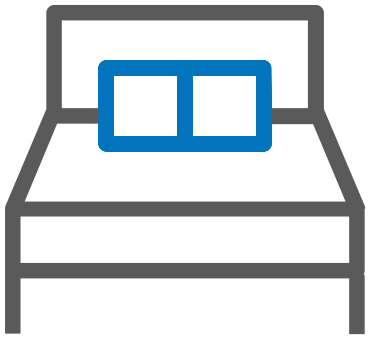
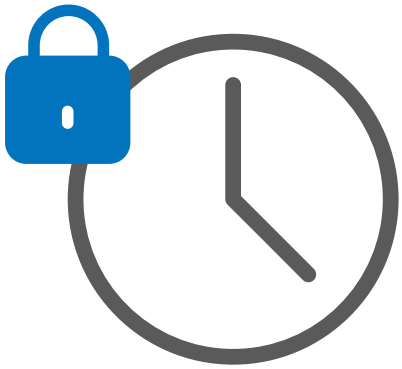
Blueprint for a productive day with a large family:

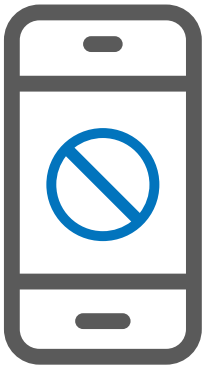
This blueprint is based on 3 key points:



Make the bed



Set “iron times”



Digital disconnect

Here's how we set up our home for a productive day:

The night before:

Make sure each child knows his or her bed, and stays in it.

- This may seem like a no-brainer, but we've got kiddos migrating from bed to bed every night. It's important for us to establish one place for each child.

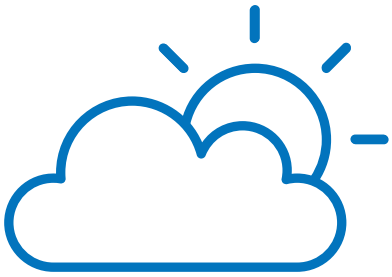
Morning:

6:00 AM

Family wakeup time. Wakeup is done gently (but not too gently). I prefer to sing to wake the children up, instead of just telling them "wake up". I let them stir for about 2-5 minutes. Then I give a slow count to 5 - whoever doesn't get out of bed after that gets disciplined. (This could mean they lose some sort of privilege for that day, like playing with an iPad, or playing outside with friends.)

- Make sure each child makes his or her bed. Although we're not going for military standards here, we do need this part of the day to be acknowledged - the same goes for the parents. For more info, here's an excellent video on the matter:

  A Navy SEAL commander explains why you should make your bed every single day



Afternoon:

5:00 PM

Work ends. Cell phones are put away and on “Do Not Disturb”. No checking of email or social media is allowed.

- However, some people can only be reached in the evening on some issues. One of the parents may need to respond to evening follow-up messages by email or social media (like WhatsApp). In that case, one of us takes an intentional time later in the evening for this - around 25m - 1 hr, usually at 8:00 PM. It’s important for one parent to support the other to have this intentional time. We don’t want to be distracted by messages throughout family time in the evening.

5:30 PM

Parents connect. A good way to transition from the workday to the evening time is to discuss the day and the coming evening with your spouse. It can also be a time to let off steam and talk about how the day went. This can be about 20 minutes. This was inspired by Jackie Bledsoe’s “The Seven Rings of Marriage”:

Learn more about “The Seven Rings of Marriage” by Jackie Bledsoe

Evening:

6:00 PM

Dinner time. This is an “iron time”. Children need to acknowledge set times in the home. Because we have the children gathered together, we use this time also to connect with our “Why”. We seek out a daily time to talk about our family’s values. This starts by me, the dad, reading a bible verse and sharing a (very) brief teaching on it. Then we pray and have our meal.

- Children are not allowed to leave the table, even if they’re finished eating. We end our meal time with a spiritual song and a review of who we are and why we live where we live.

- For us it goes like this:
  “Who are we?” “The Rosenfeld family!”
  “Where do we live?” “Jerusalem, Israel!”
  “Who do we serve?” “God!”

- Then we explain why we live in Jerusalem. For us, we live in Israel because we’re Israelis, that’s our nationality. And we live in Jerusalem because of my wife’s ministry work. We as a family are all gathered together to support my wife in her unique work. She leads a non-profit initiative to encourage young Hebrew and Arabic speakers to worship God together. Discussing the “Why” in our family helps the children understand other aspects about their daily lives. This can include questions like why they go to school where they go to school, who our friends are, and more.

- Afterwards children work on after-dinner chores. My rule as a parent is that I will not do something in the home that one of my children can do. I will only do things in the home that my children cannot do. My children can wash dishes, but they can’t yet repair a broken lock on a door, or take the car out to get gas.

- During chores, the children are given areas of responsibility - the dining room, the living room, and the kitchen. Only when all three areas are clean and in

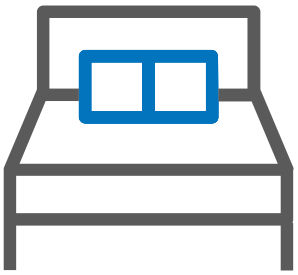
order, they are free from chores. One child might want to leave the kitchen because he or she already did a task, like clearing the table. But we teach them that if they finish their task, their next job is to find another task or help someone finish their task. No one leaves their area of responsibility until all the chores are done.

Night:

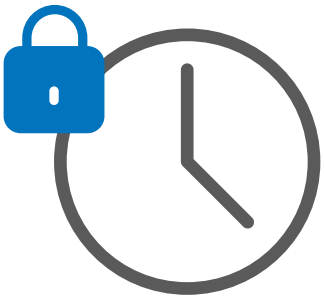
9:00 PM

Iron time. Shutdown. Our children's bedtimes vary. Some children may still be awake after this time, but I tell them, "the restaurant's closed". If they need something, they need to attend to it themselves. This is a time that the parents spend together until bedtime at 10:00 PM. We're like to either watch part of a movie, or an episode of a TV show.

Summary:



Make the bed



Set "iron times"

Digital disconnect

NOTE: This brief blueprint is how we structure our daily home life. Of course, each home is different from the other. See how you can work making the bed, setting "iron times", and digital disconnect into your home life.

Learn more about leadership and productivity with a family at: adamleerosenfeld.com