
The Morning Routine Cards We Actually Use

12 simple phrases and routines that help tired mornings feel calmer.

These are not scripts.

They are simply phrases and tiny rituals that help a child know what comes next.

Use one. Use all of them. Adapt them to your family.

Twelve phrases. Six transitions. One calmer morning.

A sample of what you will find inside.

Card 01
* WAKE-UP

Good Morning,
I'm Happy To See You

"Good morning. I'm so happy to see you."

Card 04
→ TRANSITIONS

Five More Minutes,
Then Shoes

"Five more minutes, then shoes. I'll tell you when."

Card 08
△ GOODBYE

I Will
Come Back

"I will always come back. That is the one thing I promise."

Card 12
✓ CLOSING

You Did It

"You did it. All the way to the door. That was the whole morning."

CARDS
12 Phrase Cards

TRANSITIONS
6 Moments

BONUS
Checklist + Basket

FORMAT
A4 · Print at Home

A few things worth knowing before you begin.

These cards are not a system to implement. They are small tools — reach for one when a morning feels heavy, or use the same phrase every day until it becomes part of your family's rhythm. Either is fine.

O1

PICK ONE CARD

Start with whichever card speaks to the part of the morning that feels hardest right now. You don't need to begin at the beginning.

O2

USE IT FOR A WEEK

Repetition is the point. Hearing the same phrase across multiple mornings is how it starts to feel familiar — to you and to your child.

O3

CONSISTENCY OVER PERFECTION

Forgetting one morning doesn't undo a week. The phrase will still be there tomorrow. Return to it without ceremony.

O4

THESE ARE PROMPTS, NOT RULES

Change the words to fit your voice. Add your child's name. Remove what doesn't feel right. These cards belong to your family now.

GENTLE REMINDER

*“A calm morning is not the goal.
A connected morning is.”*

* WAKE-UP

Card 01

Good Morning, I'm Happy To See You

"Good morning. I'm so happy to see you."

WHY IT HELPS

The first words of the morning set the tone for everything that follows. Before the rushing begins — before shoes and breakfast and the door — this phrase tells your child: you matter more than the schedule. A child who feels seen at the start of the day is far more likely to cooperate through the rest of it.

○ BREAKFAST

Card 02

First Breakfast, Then Clothes

"First we eat, then we get dressed. That's our order."

WHY IT HELPS

Toddlers resist transitions partly because they don't know what comes next. Naming the sequence — in the same way, every morning — gradually removes the uncertainty. The order itself becomes familiar. Over time, your child can predict the shape of the morning, which reduces the need to resist each step individually.

○ BREAKFAST

Card 03

Your Cup Is Blue Today

“Your cup is ready — the blue one, just for you.”

WHY IT HELPS

Small personalised details create a sense of belonging and calm. When a child knows their specific cup is waiting, breakfast stops being something that happens to them and becomes something prepared for them. This tiny ritual communicates care before a single lesson is taught. Ownership of one small thing makes the whole morning feel safer.

→ TRANSITIONS

Card 04

Five More Minutes, Then Shoes

“Five more minutes, then shoes. I’ll tell you when.”

WHY IT HELPS

Abrupt transitions are a leading cause of morning meltdowns. A transition warning gives the child’s nervous system time to prepare for the shift. The phrase doesn’t ask for agreement — it simply announces what’s coming. Saying it consistently, at the same point each morning, gradually teaches the child that the warning is real and the next step will follow.

→ TRANSITIONS

Card 05

One More Bite, Then Coat

“One more bite. Then coat. We’re almost ready.”

WHY IT HELPS

Offering a small, achievable task before the next transition respects the child’s pace while still moving things forward. It avoids the power struggle of an abrupt stop, and gives the child a clear endpoint they can reach on their own. “We’re almost ready” anchors everyone in shared momentum rather than individual resistance.

△ GOODBYE

Card 06

Bye House, See You Later

“Bye house. Bye kitchen. See you this afternoon.”

WHY IT HELPS

Saying goodbye to the home is a small act of closure that helps children leave willingly. It externalises the transition — the house is being said goodbye to, not the child being pulled away. This ritual also implicitly promises return: we will come back. For children who resist leaving, this phrase offers acknowledgement and reassurance in one gentle gesture.

△ GOODBYE

Card 07

Hug, Kiss, Nose Bump

“Hug, kiss, nose bump — in that order.”

WHY IT HELPS

A predictable goodbye ritual provides physical and emotional closure before separation. The order matters — because sequence is what makes it a ritual. Children who know exactly how goodbye goes are less likely to prolong it or resist it. This phrase adds gentle humour (the nose bump), which softens the moment of parting without dismissing its emotional weight.

△ GOODBYE

Card 08

I Will Come Back

“I will always come back. That is the one thing I promise.”

WHY IT HELPS

Separation anxiety is at its most acute during morning transitions. A clear, unwavering promise of return gives the child’s nervous system something concrete to hold onto. The word “always” is important — it removes contingency. Say this phrase the same way, every time, at the door. Over weeks, it becomes an anchor the child reaches for even before you say it.

→ TRANSITIONS

Card 09

Let's Do It Together

"Let's do it together. You start, I'll follow."

WHY IT HELPS

When a child resists a task — putting on shoes, packing a bag — offering togetherness rather than instruction shifts the dynamic entirely. You are no longer asking them to perform; you are joining them. "You start, I'll follow" gives the child agency and positions the parent as a cooperative presence rather than an authority. Cooperation follows naturally from felt safety.

→ TRANSITIONS

Card 10

What Comes Next?

"What comes next? Can you remember?"

WHY IT HELPS

Asking rather than telling gives a child the opportunity to demonstrate competence — and signals that you trust their memory. When a child successfully recalls the next step, it builds genuine ownership of the routine. This phrase works best once the routine has been repeated enough to be partly familiar.

△ GOODBYE

Card 11

Ready For The Door?

“Are you ready for the door? Let’s check together.”

WHY IT HELPS

A door check is a closing ritual — it marks the end of the indoor morning and the beginning of the out. Turning it into a question invites the child into readiness rather than imposing it. “Let’s check together” keeps it collaborative. Over time, the child begins running their own mental checklist before you even ask.

✓ CLOSING

Card 12

You Did It

“You did it. All the way to the door. That was the whole morning.”

WHY IT HELPS

Closing acknowledgement matters. When a parent names what happened — “you did it” — rather than just moving on, the child builds a sense of completion and competence. A quiet, specific recognition of the effort (“all the way to the door”) is enough. The routine ends as something the child finished, not something that was done to them.

Six moments. One morning.

Print this page and keep it somewhere visible — or simply read it once and let it settle.

01	Wake-up connection Cards 1 · 3 <i>“Good morning. I’m happy to see you.”</i>	<input type="radio"/>
02	Getting dressed Cards 2 · 9 <i>“First breakfast, then clothes. Let’s do it together.”</i>	<input type="radio"/>
03	Breakfast conversation Cards 3 · 5 · 10 <i>“What comes next — can you remember?”</i>	<input type="radio"/>
04	Transition warning Cards 4 · 5 <i>“Five more minutes, then shoes. I’ll tell you when.”</i>	<input type="radio"/>
05	Shoes and door ritual Cards 6 · 11 <i>“Bye house. Are you ready for the door?”</i>	<input type="radio"/>
06	Goodbye ritual Cards 7 · 8 · 12 <i>“Hug, kiss, nose bump. I will come back. You did it.”</i>	<input type="radio"/>

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*Routine is not a schedule.
Routine is emotional
predictability.*

— CHICHIBERRY PARENTING

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Some mornings still fall apart.

Some mornings somebody cries about a sock. Some mornings the breakfast is wrong and the shoes are missing and nobody can find the bag and you leave five minutes late feeling like you failed at the simplest possible thing.

Some mornings you forget half the routine. Some mornings the child who usually loves “hug, kiss, nose bump” runs out the door without looking back, and some mornings they cling to the doorframe for ten minutes.

▮ *That counts too. Every version of the morning counts.*

The routine is not there to create perfect mornings. It is not a performance you are expected to deliver without error. It is not a measure of how good a parent you are or how settled your child is or how together your family's life looks from the outside.

It is there to give your family something familiar to return to. A shape. A small shared language that says: this is how we do mornings. Not perfectly. But together.

Keep it nearby. Come back to it after the hard ones. That is exactly what it is for.

A single place for the things mornings tend to lose.

Keep these items in one basket near the door. Check each one before leaving.
The basket doesn't solve every morning — but it removes one category of searching entirely.

<input type="checkbox"/> Routine Cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Bottle
<input type="checkbox"/> Backpack	<input type="checkbox"/> Hair Brush
<input type="checkbox"/> Shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Lunchbox
<input type="checkbox"/> Comfort Item	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Add your own</i>	

NOTES

| *One basket. One place. Less searching.*

THANK YOU

If these cards helped, you may also enjoy:

More Chichiberry printables for the small moments of the day — made for families who want a little more intention and a little less noise.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM CHICHIBERRY PARENTING

PRINTABLE · LANGUAGE PROMPTS

Toddler Language Prompt Cards

40 prompts for the conversations that already happen at your table — mealtimes, transitions, play, and getting ready. No prep required. Keep it nearby and use it when the moment comes.

PRINTABLE · BEDTIME PHRASES

Calm Bedtime Phrase Cards

12 gentle phrases for the end of the day. For the moments when a child is too tired to settle and a parent is too tired to find the right words. Simple, soft, and worth keeping by the bed.

READ NEXT

→ The Morning Routine We Use When Everyone Is Tired

The article that inspired these cards — including the full routine, transition strategies, and the philosophy behind each phrase. For the mornings when the cards aren't enough and you need to understand the why.

chichiberry.com/morning-routine-everyone-tired