



THE AMERICAN EXPRESS NETWORK

## USE YOUR CARD TO PAY EVERYDAY BILLS

### Finesse The Family Routine

Routines are difficult for families to master. One of the trickiest is the turndown/wake-up routine. Nights consist of trying to get children into sleep mode, while mornings are often scenes of lost homework, misplaced briefcases, or forgotten lunches. Tame the situation with some of these easy preventive measures.

To get your children ready for bed, transform your home into a quieter, softer environment. Dim the lights, lower the television, and turn off the computer. This sends a gentle signal that playtime is over, and you are moving on to bedtime.

Experts suggest laying out clothes the night before, but don't stop there. Prepare and refrigerate lunch boxes, set the kitchen table with cereal boxes, bowls, and spoons, place bread in the toaster oven, and fill the coffeemaker with water. Have children return all articles of schoolwork to their backpacks. Likewise, make sure your briefcase is ready to go.

Organizedhome.com's Cynthia Townley Ewer recommends creating a "launchpad" for each family member - a dedicated space to keep all the "out-the-door essentials." Whether it's a cubbyhole, a shelf, or a corner of the kitchen table, your family will lift off easier if each member can always find must-haves in the same spot.