

500 Word Essay on Being Late

It is a familiar sight at schools everywhere. A car screeches into the parking lot just as the late bell rings. A parent and child jump out and run to the front door, frantically zipping up the child's backpack and giving a quick goodbye kiss. The child goes into school, and the parent heads back to the car, looking like they just finished working a 12-hour shift. Yep, they were late. As parents, we know how those simple five minutes can throw us off for the rest of our day, but what about the kids? How does being late to school really impact a child? Is everything OK once he or she gets settled in the classroom? Probably not.

If you have ever volunteered in a classroom and seen the late students, come in, your heart can't help but break for them. Their faces are sweaty from rushing and red from the embarrassment of disrupting class. Those children might also be wondering how they are supposed to "hurry to class" while at the same time not run in the hallways. With morning messages blaring overhead, they shove their coats and backpacks into their lockers or cubbies. In their haste, they might drop their notebook on the floor. They quietly put homework where it belongs and their lunch into the bin. With all eyes on them, they finally settle at their desk, 20 minutes after the teacher started instructing. They have missed important announcements and discussions about last night's homework. The rest of the class will sit quietly while the teacher brings the late student up to date on what was missed. That child didn't mean to be late. Maybe they were just really tired. But Mom might be mad. And everyone is irritating them, and now they don't understand the assignment. They never quite catch up, and they are on edge. Who wouldn't be with that start to the day?

It may seem like 10 minutes isn't really that much, but for the typical school day of 6.5 hours, a student who is only 10 minutes late every day will miss 30 hours of school time that year. If a child is 10 minutes late getting to school, it is more like 20 minutes until they are actually learning. The impact on the class as a whole is even larger. If two kids are late, one by 5 minutes and one by 10 minutes, then the class schedule might get pushed back. That means the teacher will need to alter something else during the day to account for time the class lost helping a late student catch up.

The occasional tardy is nearly inevitable. Things happen to all of us. Coffee spills and shoes get lost. Conversations need to happen. There are a million things that can cause people to run behind. Ideally our daily routines would include time to account for mishaps to minimize tardiness. If you are finding that your child is late one or more times per week, though, you may need to change your routine to ensure a successful start to your day. Here are a few suggestions that may help.

1) **Pack backpacks/lunchboxes the night before.** The last thing you want to be doing as you are rushing out the door is trying to find lost homework. Make sure everyone's backpacks are ready to go and prepare home lunches as much as you can. Also fill their water bottles ahead of time and store in the refrigerator.

2) **Lay clothes out.** Seems too simple to make a difference, but hunting down matching socks or pants without holes in the knees is quite the time consumer. Not only that, but you won't have to worry that you didn't notice your child was wearing shorts in negative degree weather until after you arrived at school.

3) **Set up a “last stop” area.** Pick any available area near the door you typically leave through and put everything there for the day: backpacks, phones, homework, and especially coats and shoes. There are no last-minute distractions this way.

4) **Play a family favorite music list.** Music can get people moving and can even turn a mood around. Pick upbeat songs that everyone enjoys. Play the same set each day so that everyone starts to recognize the cues and where they should be. For example, when the second song ends, breakfast is over. The third song ending means teeth should be brushed, and when the last song starts, they should be heading to get their coats and backpacks on.

5) If all else fails, wake up earlier. Not the most enjoyable solution, but sometimes drastic measures are needed.