

## What I've Learned About Getting Three Kids Out of the House on Time

First of all, I don't pretend that I can accomplish this monstrous feat EVERY time, but I have figured out a few tricks of getting out of the house on time MOST of the time. With three kids under 4, pretty much every event from diaper changing to birthday parties needs to be well-thought out, if not precisely planned. And a few tricks will make life much easier.

Trick #1: Staple Stock. I personally love to have things in my car at all times that I will need on most outings. If you've got three kids, you've either got a SUV or a minivan. There should be at least a small area in the back where you can keep staple "outing" items. I actually have a small plastic drawer set in the back of my minivan. I have it stocked with diapers, baby wipes, snacks, formula, extra clothes for each kid, and water. Keeping some staple items in your car makes getting out of the house way easier.

Trick #2: A toilet. Yes, I have a kids' toilet in my car. Every parent knows as soon as you get in the car, someone has to pee. Always. If you have a toilet in your car, you can leave your house once, without returning five minutes later for the bathroom. And with a potty-training 2 year-old, it is a necessity.

Trick #3: Nighttime baths. Making sure the kids are clean when they wake up will cut a lot of time out of getting ready. I have tried to bathe in the morning and it definitely hinders getting out of the house on time. Wet hair, pulling kids away from their bath toys, and more will quickly push your bath schedule over its allotted time period.

Trick #4: Separate your kids' clothes into categories. I have fancy clothes in one section of the closet, nice clothes in another, and play clothes in drawers. Being able to grab the appropriate clothing for where you are going at the drop of a hat will help loads. To make dressing easier, I always pull out two outfits to give the kids a choice. You can avoid fighting over what to wear this way. As many of you may know, kids sometimes have VERY strong opinions on their wardrobes. My 2 year-old, Jessica, is already quite verbal about her style choices, and getting to "choose" her own outfit makes her feel like she's in charge. So, we get to leave the house without that fight.

Trick #5: Have a few power bars for yourself in your purse because we all know you didn't have time to eat while getting everyone ready to go. Munching on a power bar in the car will keep you healthy and sane.

Trick #6: Don't get too stressed out. A stressed out mom makes kids act out, so they are more likely to be extra uncooperative. Nothing is more important than your family. If you're late, you're late. No biggie.