

Back to School Tips

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“What starts well, ends well.”

Are our children and families ready for the new school year?

September is a time of transition for everyone in the family. Going from summer fun to a more structured and serious school environment will cause most children and parents to feel a bit out of sorts. Still, children starting preschool, Kindergarten, elementary, middle, high school or any grade, can greet the new school year with open eyes, ears, arms, and minds.

At school children will find books, computers, and other educational tools. But in order to take advantage of these, it is necessary that they bring healthy bodies and alert minds. While they may learn from their teachers and classmates at school, at home parents are the most important teachers and learning mates for their children.

There are things you can do to help your children develop or get back into a school time routine:

1. Make sure your children get enough sleep. Set a bedtime routine to help them unwind. When a child is sleep deprived they may have difficult time learning.
2. Get up a little earlier in the morning so you don't have to rush. Whenever possible feed your children a healthy breakfast. When children skip breakfast or just have something sweet, they can find it hard to concentrate at school.
3. Have dinner together as much as possible. As you eat together check in with a simple game of “good thing, bad thing,” where each family member goes around and says something about their day. Bedtime is another time to take a few minutes to check in and see how things went at school.
4. Some parents find that having children get their backpacks all ready for the next day before going to bed helps to avoid a morning rush. It's always disappointing for children to get to school and realize they forgot their homework or lunch money.
5. Talk to your child about their after school schedule. When's the best time for them to do homework? For some children, playing after school is important since they've been sitting in class all day and they really need a time to run around. Other children like to get their homework done and out of the way, so they have the rest of the night to relax and play on the computer or hang out with family or friends. When possible, set a homework time so everyone knows what to expect. This will decrease your yelling and nagging. If your child is spending too long on homework, check in with the teacher to see if all of the children are having difficulty, or if your child needs extra help. Don't hesitate to call the teacher if your son or daughter seems unhappy or stressed. For some children, adjusting to a new grade, new students, and new expectations takes time and support.

Parents, take good care of your selves. Notice when you're getting stressed, practice staying calm, and find time to connect with you kids while you all adjust to the end of summer and the start of a new school year.

Resources:

- www.greatschools.net/content/backToSchool.page

