

Getting Ready for School

While counting down the days until school starts, it's important not to stress.

Now is the time to start talking to your kids about school, and get them excited about the upcoming year. When doing so, try to sound excited and talk in positive terms. Also, when shopping for going back to school, do it together. Let the kids have a say about their new clothes and school supplies.

It's also important to get settled back into a school week routine. If your child's bedtime is 9 p.m. during the school year, but they stay up until 11 during the summer, you're going to need to need to adjust. A good plan is to start pushing their bedtime up 15 to 30 minutes at a time so that they're ready when school starts. At the same time, you're also going to want to start waking them up earlier in the morning, toward the time they'll need to be awake during the school year. For very young children, who have perhaps become accustomed to taking a nap during the day, now is the time to get them out of the habit.

A regimented meal schedule should also be implemented as the summer vacation comes to an end. Once school starts, a child's ability to snack on a whim will be gone. So it's a good idea to get back into the routine of eating meals at specific times.

This is especially important at breakfast time, as morning routines are often the hardest at the start of the school year. Start practicing your morning routine now, and if a child is going to need to eat immediately after waking up during the school year it's a good time to get into the habit.

After school activities must be taken into consideration, as well. Once school begins, schedules seem to explode. Now is the time to start figuring out which kids are going to be participating in what activities and whose responsibility it will be to get them. The more you can organize these things early, the better you will feel about the schedule later.

The start of the school year always sneaks up on us. Don't let this time cause distress or despair to you or your children. Remember the fun you've had this summer, and making going back to school fun, also. This will give you a smooth start to the new school year, and create a more enjoyable experience for all.

Some back to school tips from Care.com.

- Visit cultural attractions, such as museums, to shift their brains into “scholar mode.”
- Encourage your kids to read at least one book before the school year begins.
- Create a family calendar that tracks everyone’s activities and commitments.
- Set a regular alarm each day that signals the start of homework time.
- Inventory last year’s school supplies before going to buy more.
- Create a dedicated space for your kids to store their school supplies and technology.
- Remove distractions like TVs and video game consoles from homework areas.
- Touch base with teachers early to troubleshoot any issues your kids may be having.
- Encourage your kids to lay out their school clothes the night before and have them pack their school bags before going to sleep at night.
- Get copies of school menus in advance to discuss lunch choices and get your kids involved in lunch choices by creating and preparing their daily lunch menus.
- Set up the breakfast table before you go to bed.
- Keep a small emergency allowance in your kids’ bags, just in case.
- Have a backup transportation mode planned in case the primary mode falls through.
- Schedule study blocks on the weekends before big tests.