



BACK TO SCHOOL

Time to hit the
BOOKS
and have some
FUN!

Re-Start Studying Habits

From pre-kindergarten to college, the back-to-school season is in full swing. This means a schedule packed with extra-curricular activities, playdates or social events.

And while school is meant to be a fun, interactive experience for students and teachers, it also means studying.

Neglecting studies is not the way to get the school year started on the right foot. Falling behind early could mean problems later in the semester. Luckily, there are plenty of great tips for parents and students to follow that will lead to a successful study strategy, even while balancing an active social life.

TALK WITH TEACHERS

One of the most powerful ways to improve your study skills is to communicate with your teachers. They are there to help you in any way possible, so pick their brain on lessons that you're struggling to understand or need more information on.

The key to a great study session is first having knowledge of your subject, and your teacher can help make this possible.

TAKING NOTES

Writing down copious, detailed notes is great, but



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what if your teacher is a fast talker or you find yourself falling behind in certain subjects? Developing a shorthand method of taking notes can help resolve these challenges.

Since you're likely to be the only one reviewing your notes, use short sentences and don't be a stickler for grammar – as long as you can read your thoughts when it's time to translate them into a paper or report.

CREATE MINI-DEADLINES

For the procrastinator in us all, mini-deadlines can help keep tasks on track and homework from piling up. As a student, once you get

acclimated to how long you need to complete your homework, you should be able to estimate which classes take the most time. This will help you prioritize work and keep your schedule clear.

The First Week: Parents

The first week of school can be one of the most crucial periods of the school year, especially for students who may be a little apprehensive about starting a new semester.



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There's the adjustment to the schedule, the new responsibilities and getting reacquainted with their peers and teachers. The cumulative impact of these factors can sometimes lead to student anxiety, according to the National Association of School Psychologists.

Parents have the power to play a crucial role in easing their child's nerves and ensuring a positive experience for all. Your love, support and attention can make a big difference in keeping your child positive and engaged during the first week of school.

CLEAR YOUR WORK SCHEDULE

If at all possible, make yourself available for your child before and after school. This may mean postponing business trips, asking peers to cover later shifts or taking a

week's vacation. Your availability can make a big difference in helping your child adjust to a new routine.

Urge your child to discuss any challenges openly and honestly – then simply listen. The NASP says that parents can do more harm than good

by reacting negatively to an issue their child may be facing. Take a positive approach and help your child talk through potential solutions.

EXTRA TIME

You don't want to start off the school year with a tardy note from your child's teacher. Make sure your child has plenty of time to wake up, eat breakfast, get dressed and make it to school on time.

This may require setting the alarm clock a little earlier than normal. This can be a tough transition after a summer filled with late nights and sleeping in. The NASP recommends starting this new schedule two weeks before school starts to help smooth the transition.

AFTER SCHOOL

Take some extra time after school and work to discuss your child's day. They may have homework in the first week, so offer to look it over when they're finished or make yourself available for questions.

If your child returns to an empty home after school, be sure to review emergency plans with them and leave a number of a neighbor who is home during the day. Have your child meet your neighbor contacts to avoid awkwardness in calling them if needed.

Vaccinations Required

With the hustle and bustle of the back-to-school season, it is crucial to not overlook the vaccinations that your child needs.

All school-age children – from preschoolers to college students – need vaccines to keep them protected from serious diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges parents to check in with their child’s pediatrician to make sure they are up to date on recommended and required vaccines.

Parents can find out which vaccines their children need and when the doses should be administered by reviewing CDC’s recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule (www.cdc.gov). Different states also have specific vaccine requirements for particular grade levels.

YOUNG CHILDREN

The CDC identifies 14 diseases that can become serious or even life-threatening to a child during the early years of life. Parents who choose not to vaccinate against them risk the disease not only for their children, but also for other children and adults throughout the entire community, the CDC says.

PRETEEN AND TEEN

As children move into the teenage years, they are more at risk for catching certain diseases, like meningococcal meningitis, according to the CDC. HPV is a vaccine built to protect against certain cancers and is recommended to be given during the

preteen years. Check the CDC list for a complete immunization schedule for people ages seven through 18.

For diseases such as whooping cough, the protection from vaccine doses can wear off in the preteen years. Kids ages 11 and 12 are recommended to get the booster shot Tdap, which is a version of the protective DTaP vaccine given to infants and young children.

THE FLU VACCINE

Flu vaccines are recommended for all children 6 months and older. This obviously includes kids in preschool and elementary school. If your child is afraid of shots, your family doctor may have the option of using a nasal spray instead.

The flu can be a potentially serious issue affecting your child’s overall health, as well as the school attendance record. The CDC recommends adding the flu shot to your back-to-school routine every year.



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Smart Snacking Advice

What your child eats and drinks for snacks can either propel them or hold them back, especially in terms of school performance. Serving healthy snacks to children has been shown to improve their study habits.



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The California After School Resource Center reports that healthy snacks lead to better focus in the classroom and better eating at home, as well.

Choosing plenty of fruits, vegetables and water during snack periods is important to provide good nutrition, supporting lifelong healthy eating habits and helping to prevent heart disease, cancer and obesity.

CALORIES ON THE RISE

The number of calories that children consumed from snacks increased by 120 calories per day between 1977 and 1996, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

It is up to teachers, caregivers and parents to curb this trend of increased caloric intake. Healthier options in the classroom, during

after-school programs and on the sports field can go a long way toward improving energy levels and overall health for students.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that fruits and vegetables comprise the majority of snacks served to students, since most kids do not eat the recommended amount of five to 13 servings per day.

Fruits and vegetables are crucial to increasing the amount of vitamins A and C and fiber in your child's diet – and are also less costly than other less-healthy snacks. The average cost of a serving of fruit or vegetable (all types – fresh, frozen and canned) is 25 cents per serving, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's a steal of a deal compared to a \$1 candy bar or bag of chips.

DRINKS

Soda, sweetened tea, lemonade and juice drinks: all major no-no's according to the AAP. Children who drink more sweetened drinks consume more calories and are more likely to be overweight than kids who drink fewer soft drinks.

These drinks also work to displace healthful foods in kids' diets, says the AAP. Milk can help prevent osteoporosis, and 100-percent juice can help prevent heart disease. Both are recommended options for keeping kids as healthy as possible during snack time.

School Travel Safety



From the school bus to the neighborhood carpool, your child should have a safe, convenient way of getting to school. The American Academy of Pediatrics reminds parents to be the guiding force in ensuring optimal safety in all modes of transportation.

So whether your child arrives to school via school bus, car or their own feet, it is up to you to make sure their route is safe and their understanding of the rules is clear.

SCHOOL BUS RULES

- Encourage your child to wear the bus' lap or shoulder seat belts, if possible.
- Also teach your student to wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Students should also understand the behavior rules on the bus and help keep the driver free from distractions.

CAR TRAVEL

- Children should ride in a car seat with a harness as long as possible. They are ready for a booster seat when they have reached the top weight or height allowed for the seat.
- All children younger than 13 years old should ride in the rear seat of vehicles, if possible. If you are driving more children than will fit in the back seat, move the front-seat passenger's seat as far back as possible and have the child ride in a booster seat if the seat belts do not fit properly without it.
- Teen drivers should refrain from eating, drinking, phone calls and texting while driving. Many crashes occur due to driver distraction.

WALKING / RIDING BIKES

- When riding a bicycle to school, always wear a helmet and ride on the right, in the same direction as car traffic.
- Wear bright-colored or white clothing to increase visibility. This is particularly important after dark, when your child may come late from a practice or event.
- Make sure your child's pathway to school, whether riding or walking, is well-lit and safe. Walk with them if at all possible until you feel confident in their pedestrian skills.

Making New Friends

Making new friends can be a challenging part of starting the school year – particularly for students who switch schools often because of their parents' work requirements,.



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Students sometimes come from across districts, state lines or even countries to join a new school, entering the environment not knowing anyone. This can be an intimidating venture for students at any age or education level.

Being the only source of continuity after moving away, parents must work diligently to create a sense of

belonging and help their child overcome anxiety, the National Association of School Psychologists says.

JUMPING RIGHT IN

If your child is nervous or anxious about joining a new group of friends, tell them not to be. They will undoubtedly find fellow students who share the same interests as

them, whether they be sports, music or a certain subject.

Teach your child to pay attention to what their peers are talking about and pipe in with their thoughts on the matter. Joining discussions at the lunch table or in the hallway before class can help your child get to know new friends.

PARENTS: TAKE IT EASY

If your child is anxious or upset about school, think of ways to let them know you are thinking of them. A little support can go a long way toward changing their attitude about school. Without prodding, talk often about their days and what they learned, but also about more general top-

ics like what they had for school lunch or if anyone said anything funny during the day.

Lessen the load on chores or extra responsibilities while they acclimate. Reduced pressure at home can lead to a more relaxed and comfortable entry into a new school environment. Offer to help with homework, school events or sports practices.

School: By the Numbers

Though the current cumulative state of the budget climate continues to challenge administrators across the country, there are some definite bright spots when delving deeper in the world of education statistics.

More than 50 million students will attend public elementary and secondary schools in the fall, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. With population increases and high enrollment rates, this number could surpass last year's record-breaking numbers.

Nearly 22 million students attended college last year, which represented an increase of 6.5 million over the past decade. These numbers are enough to excite students, teachers, professors and staff, alike. Here are more to stoke your educational fire – all from the NCES:

- About 1.3 million children are expected to attend public prekindergarten this fall.
- Enrollment in public kindergarten is projected to reach approximately 3.8 million students.
- Expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools inched near \$600 billion last year and included salaries, student transportation, school books and energy costs. This put the average spending per student at \$11,810.
- The overall dropout rate has declined sharply across all races and age groups over the past decade or so – from 12.1 percent in 1990 to 7.1 percent in 2011.

• The percentage of students enrolling in college in the fall immediately following high school completion was 68.2 percent in 2011. Females (72 percent) enrolled at a higher rate than males (64 percent).

• Private schools continue to better equip themselves to handle their

students' needs, as about 500,000 full-time teachers worked in them last year. This resulted in an estimated pupil-to-student ratio of 12.3.

• Every year, colleges and universities expect to award more than 900,000 associate's degrees, nearly two

million bachelor's degrees and nearly 800,000 master's degrees.

• The median range of earnings for young adults with bachelor's degrees was \$45,000, while it was \$22,900 for those without a high school diploma or equivalent.



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