



Back to School

Starting the New Year Right

Back to school after a summer away can be a nerve-racking experience for some students.

For some it may be a new school, a new grade or new state altogether. There are ways, despite uncertainty, to make back to school a positive and exciting experience.

A FIRST DAY OUTFIT

Looking and feeling your best can also help you do your best. Taking your student to the store and allowing him or her to pick out their first day outfit can help them look forward to their first day of the new school year. It's important that you allow your students to buy the clothes they feel help express themselves the best.

Many stores have back-to-school specials that would make picking out the first-day look easy and affordable. There are other ways your child can express themselves and make a great first impression on the first day of school such as a new haircut, new shoes or a new backpack.

MAKE A SCHOOL RESOLUTION

Although people mostly make resolutions at the beginning of each calendar year, it can be a good idea to create a resolution before each school semester or school year.

Knowing your goal is half the battle of achieving your goal. Creating school resolutions can become a family tradition in your household. Here are a few ideas for school resolutions you can talk to your children about:

- Eat healthier.
- Make 5 new friends.

- Smile more and say hello more often.
- Create better study habits.
- Stop procrastinating.
- Complete assignments on time.
- Create a daily planner and keep up with the planner.

PREPPING FOR CLASSES

Most students know what classes they will have on the first day of school. Have your children look into their classes ahead of time.

They will walk in prepared and more confident after knowing what to expect. Getting to know their teachers or professors is also a good way to prepare for the class.

Contacting their teacher or professor to talk about the class and what his expectations are will help your children be prepared for what is to come once school starts again.

FIRST-DAY PICTURE

An inexpensive and fun way to celebrate the school year starting again with the whole family is to create picture frames for first-day pictures. Picture frame crafts can be purchased at any store that sells arts and crafts items. Your children can create different themes for the frames each year and frames that express who they are.

Creating picture frames with your family can create many memories year in and year out. Creating frames together also shows your children that you support them and enjoy creating memories and fun.



Create a Routine

The routine your children had during school slowly faded during the summer break. Now that school is about to begin, your children must spend time to create and get into the school routine again.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Summer break allowed your children to go to bed a little later than they would during the school year. Sleep is important, but having enough time to prepare for school each day is just as important. Create a schedule for your children to follow that will allow them to go to bed at a consistent hour while also allowing them to wake up at least two hours before school is to start so they can be awake and prepared to take on the day.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOMEWORK

Creating a time at home to get work done can help your children stay on track during the school year. The U.S. Department of Education says homework can help children develop strong study habits and positive attitudes. According to ed.gov, homework helps students:

- Review and practice what they have covered in class.



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- Prepare for class the next day.
- Learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials and websites.
- Explore subjects more fully than classroom time permits.
- Extend learning by applying skills they already have to new situations.
- Integrate their learning by applying different skills to a single task, such as book reports or science projects.
- Learn to manage time and meet deadlines.

HELP WITH HOMEWORK

Parents can help their chil-

dren with homework by setting a regular time and place for homework that removes distractions that may interfere with their progress.

The U.S. Department of Education advises parents to provide supplies, identify resources and show interest in what your child is learning. Remember that communication with teachers and counselors at their school is very important for helping your child with homework.

SLEEPING BETTER

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

advises children to get plenty of sleep each night. Sleeping is not only about the amount of hours you sleep, but more about the quality of sleep that is gained each night.

Placing yourself and your children on a sleep schedule will make it easier for your body to get good quality sleep. Here is a list of the recommended hours of sleep various age groups should get each night, according to the HHS:

- Most adults need seven to eight hours of good quality sleep on a regular schedule each night.

• Preschoolers need to sleep between 10 to 13 hours a day, including naps.

• School-aged children need nine to 12 hours of sleep each night.

• Teens need eight to 10 hours of sleep each night.

Staying on a consistent sleeping schedule can benefit the body in a variety of ways. Good quality sleep reduces stress, can help you maintain a healthy weight, think more clearly and do better in school and at work. Sleep can also lower your risk for serious health problems, like diabetes and heart disease.

Make a Healthy Breakfast

Nothing will start the day off better than a big, healthy breakfast to celebrate your student's first day back to school.

Healthy breakfasts have plenty of benefits for the body and mind, according to kid-shealth.org, a doctor-reviewed nonprofit site created by physician Neil Izenberg. It's important for children to have breakfast every day, and what they eat is every bit as important, too.

Kids who eat breakfast tend to be healthier overall and are more likely to participate in physical activities.

Here are some healthy breakfast choices that can get your students ready for school, according to kid-shealth.org:

- Whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk topped with fruit.
- Whole-grain waffles topped with peanut butter and fruit.
- Half a whole-grain bagel topped with peanut butter and fresh fruit (banana or apple wedges) and low-fat milk.
- Shredded cheese on a whole-wheat tortilla, folded in half, microwaved for 20 seconds and topped with salsa.

Kidshealth.org says kids who eat breakfast are more likely to get fiber, calcium and other important nutrients. Kids who eat breakfast also



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tend to keep their weight under control, have lower blood cholesterol levels and make fewer trips to the school nurse with stomach complaints related to hunger.

MAKE BREAKFAST TOGETHER

Another great way to make back-to-school a special occasion for all your students and to be able to gain the benefits of a healthy breakfast is to plan and prepare breakfast together.

Having everyone chime in and plan the breakfast the day before will help your young ones look forward to the following day. Along with the benefits of a healthy and full belly, your children will walk in to school more awake and focused. If making a breakfast together isn't possible because of travel and work, the second best thing to do is to plan a meal the day before. Prepare healthy snacks like fruit and cereal that your children can eat the

following morning, on the bus or between classes.

MAKING BREAKFAST HAPPEN

Morning rushes shouldn't keep your children from eating a healthy breakfast each morning. There is sometimes a life adjustment that needs to be done so that your family gets on to a new routine. Kidshealth.org shares a list of a few options your family can consider to make sure breakfast can happen:

- Stock your kitchen with healthy breakfast options.
- Prepare as much as you can the night before, such as getting dishes and utensils ready or cutting up fruit.
- Get everyone up earlier.
- Let kids help plan and prepare breakfast.
- Have grab-and-go alternatives — fresh fruit, individual boxes or baggies of whole-grain, low-sugar cereal, yogurt or smoothies, trail mix — on days when there is little or no time to eat.

Making New Friends

Making friends in school is every bit as important as getting good grades but can be a nerve-racking experience for some children. Here are some tips and ways that you can build your child's confidence to make friends.

WATCHING YOUR KIDS

Watching how your child socializes will help you find the root of what is keeping him from making friends. Your child may have anxiety in large groups of people or have a tough time thinking of how to initiate a conversation with other children.

Take your child to a park, a school activity or sport and watch how your child interacts with other children. Being a “fly on the wall” can help you see what skills your child lacks and what he may be doing wrong. This could be the best way to diagnose the problem and know what skills your child will need help building.

ROLE PLAY AT HOME

Your child might find it difficult starting a conversation with other children. They may be overthinking how to start the conversation. Role playing at home can help your child with initiating conversations.

Sit down with your child



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and discuss topics that interest them and would like to start a conversation with. Practice initiating the conversation and discussing the topics until your child feels comfortable.

Play dates are another way your child can get practice socializing. Setting up play dates with children your child is comfortable around to practice the conversation topics you role played at home. Watch how your child socializes and focus on whether the other child is having fun with

your child. Discuss what you saw with your child after the play date and how they felt discussing the topics he created.

BE A SOCIAL COACH

When an athlete in a sport finds a task, position or skill difficult, they don't push the problem to the side or avoid it. The athlete continues to practice the skill until they get it right and it comes naturally. Help your child see socializing the same way an athlete sees that skill, and help your child

build and strengthen that skill.

Do not avoid the problem because your child is having a difficult time. Help them understand that it is important to know how to build relationships. Learning to build friendships when they are young will help them down the road.

BE SUPPORTIVE AND OFFER PRAISE

Your child may find making friends to be scary and nerve-racking. Making friends is not easy for everyone.

Do not compare your child to siblings that may find making friends and socializing easy. Your child may be looking for a couple of really good friendships rather than having many casual friends. Everyone is different. Remember that your child may have different social limits than their siblings.

Their happiness is what's most important. Praise and support your child for every accomplishment they make and make sure they know that you are there to help them.

Organizing a Backpack

One of the most overlooked and simplest ways for student to prepare for school is to organize their backpack and supplies.

Being organized is one of the few things that can help clear a student's head and can affect how stressed they feel. As school passes by, a backpack can easily clutter and become more foe than friend.

Helping your student choose a backpack that fits his needs is just as important as organization. Here are some things to look for when choosing and organizing the right backpack for your child.

CHOOSE A BACKPACK THAT FITS

There are many types of backpacks that have different styles of compartments and uses for them. There are all types of sizes of backpacks such as camping backpacks that are built with many zip-pers for pencils and pens and miscellaneous school supplies.

Does your child's school supply them with an iPad or other type of technology? There are backpacks with compartments for laptops and iPads.

Does your child play a sport? Look for a duffle bags big enough to carry their

cleats and other equipment along with school supplies.

Take time to talk to your child about the kind of backpack that meets their school needs and after-school program needs.

UTILIZE POCKETS

Does your child like a back-

pack with tons of pockets and compartments? Do they carry plenty of pencils and miscellaneous objects like a lunch and laptop? The best way to organize the pockets of your backpack is to completely empty the bag and lay the items that will fill the bag into organized piles.

Help your child to place essential day-to-day items in their bag. Find and assign a place for each item.

KEEPING THE BAG CLEAN

As the school year passes, you child's bookbag will clutter with assignments and other objects they gather throughout

the year. To keep the backpack from turning into a cluttered mess, assign weekly to monthly clean-out sessions that will allow your child to reorganize the bag. Give your child a folder that they can fill with papers from school to keep at home so the bag does not clutter with unnecessary papers.



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School Supply Shopping Tips



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Back-to-school can be overwhelming for parents and children. Buying school supplies can drain the bank, especially, if you have multiple children in multiple grades to buy supplies for. Knowing what to get and what you lack is the key to budgeting.

SCHOOL SUPPLY ESSENTIALS

Knowing what you have can save you from spending on items you don't necessarily need to buy more of. There are items that you can usually count on buying year in and year out. If you have multiple children, it would be a good idea to buy these items in bulk. Here is a list of supplies that you

can expect to buy: notebooks, folders, binders, pencils, pens, colored pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, and glue or glue sticks. These supplies can vary by school, class, and grade. Check the specific lists for your children's school and grade.

SHOP AHEAD OF TIME

Being prepared and shopping over the span of a few weeks can help save you money. Buying items at the last minute can mean being forced to spend on the more expensive school supplies. Start buying items immediately when stores start to put them out. Make sure you pick up the items you know that your children will need.

Do not try to buy every single item at once. Spreading out your purchases can help you save money as you continue to look for items. Picking up a few items each time you shop will allow you to give yourself time to investigate and find out what your

students will actually need. Remember, the key is to buy what they need. Don't spend on items that you are not sure they will use.

COMPARING PRICES

Many stores start putting out back-to-school items in July. Spreading out purchases will allow you to give yourself time to compare prices of items sold at different stores. Comparing prices is the best way to save on back-to-school deals and save time by not having to visit multiple stores. There are various apps that are made to help you save money during the back-to-school rush. Search your device's app store.

BUYING CLOTHING

The back-to-school rush can be very overwhelming if your student's school does not have a uniform dress code. Clothes shopping can be the most expensive part of your back-to-school preparation.

If you have multiple children to shop for, try to save by giving younger children the clothes the older siblings grew out of. Hand-me-down clothing can save you from spending on every single child. Make sure that the clothes are in good condition with no holes or tears in them.

Here is a list of essential clothing items your child could need for school:

- Two to three pairs of jeans.
- Three to five long sleeve-sleeved shirts.
- Three to five short-sleeved shirts.
- Two to three hoodies.
- Two to three sweaters.
- Two to three pants and/or skirts.
- Seven pairs of socks and underwear.

The number of shoes your child will need varies on the activities, dress code and how active your child is. Making sure your child has two good pairs of shoes, including one pair of sneakers, is a safe number.

Students today are at an advantage over students in the past. They have technology and the world's largest storage of data at their fingertips.

Using technology correctly and efficiently can aid in the acceleration of your child's education.

TECHNOLOGY MAKES LIFE EASIER

Most students have phones or tablets at home that they use for gaming or exploring the internet. That same phone or tablet is the ultimate Swiss army knife.

You can use that device to create reminders to study, start homework or turn an assignment in. There are many apps that can help you accomplish numerous tasks.

One of the main pros of using technology is not having the clutter of papers that come with a planner and notes. All can be saved into the device or in the cloud.

NOTE-TAKING

There are numerous apps designed to help you stay organized and take notes. These same apps even allow you to keep the notes in one single, easy-to-find place in your phone.

Google has created numerous free-to-use apps that allow students to write, take notes and save the notes directly in their email. They are even able to share the apps with other students via email, making work projects at home a little easier. You can find various

note-taking applications in your device's app store.

Find out which is easiest for your child to maneuver and allow them to explore the app to figure out what's best for them.

KEEPING A CALENDAR

A calendar is an important tool if used correctly. Devices have made calendars easy to use and maneuver.

Color coding events are one of the many ways calendars can be utilized to help your children stay organized and

focused. Knowing what to put into a calendar is very important, too.

Your child should put events that need to be done by a certain date and time in the calendar. Any tasks that can be done at any time do not need to be placed in the calendar because it will only create clutter they don't need.

Keeping up with the calendar is one of the most important and difficult parts of having one. Set reminders in your phone to check it at least twice a day — once in the morning

before school and once at night while doing homework. It will keep your child from forgetting to turn in or complete assignments.

USING REMINDERS

Your child might be taking numerous classes and being assigned homework from most of them. They also may be participating in various extracurricular activities in and outside of school. It is easy to forget about an assignment or an event on a certain date. Utilizing reminders can

help juggle all those events and make it simpler for your student to remain focused.

Setting reminders builds habits. Set reminders everywhere you can on all devices your child or family may have. Have your child set reminders to check and update their planners twice a day. They also can set reminders to check and update their calendars.

Taking advantage of the simple technology we're given can help to keep your child focused and prepared for school.

Take Advantage of Tech

