



Six Tips for Making the Start of School Less Stressful

The beginning of the school year is an exciting time, but for many children getting back into the routine can be difficult. Becoming familiar with new classrooms, classmates, rules, and teachers can be a difficult transition. Below are ideas for starting the new school year right.

1. Return to a School Sleep Schedule - Help children make the transition easier by getting them ready physically for early mornings. A gradual change is often more difficult than an immediate change. The first few days of getting up early and going to bed early may be difficult, but this will be helpful in the long run. Make getting up in the mornings easier by doing fun activities such as going on a walk, making breakfast together, or taking an early bike ride.

2. Introduce a New Environment or Re-Introduce a Familiar One: Three months goes by quickly, but children often forget many important things about school. Make a book with your child to remind them of their classmates' names, teachers' names, school layout (auditorium, art room, music room, etc.), bus rules, classroom rules, and school rules. Children can help by drawing pictures or writing the text. For children starting a new classroom or school, the teacher most likely will send information home that can be used to write a book.



From *Bus Rules*

3. Take Opportunities to Visit the School - Schools often have open houses or let children stop by before the year starts. A child's stress can be reduced by seeing their classroom and meeting their teacher. If this is not possible, drive by the school and point out key areas such as the bus drop off/pick up, cafeteria, playground, auditorium, and gymnasium.

4. Involve Kids - Shopping for a book bag, new shoes, pencil holder, and other school necessities is a fun tradition for many families. Help your child write a list of items they need for school. Take the list to the store and let them pick out their own supplies. The list is a great way to practice reading and writing as well as planning. Give older children a budget to practice their math skills and to learn about decision making and purchasing.

5. Plan Ahead - Parents have many things to remember before the year starts. Make a list and check things off so your stress does not become your child's stress. Scheduling medical appointments, buying school supplies, and figuring out the bus schedule in advance will make the days leading up to school more relaxed and less activity packed.

6. Create Summer Mementos - The end of summer can be very sad for many children. To remind them of the summer, have children create a collage of pictures, objects (e.g. event ticket stubs or magazine advertisements of movies or places they attended), or drawings. They also can make something for people they will miss. Have them write letters or make cards for people they will not see regularly during the school year such as camp counselors, camp friends, or lifeguards at the pool.

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