
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Tips for a Smooth Back- to-School Start



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

A new school year is an exciting time for most kids. It's a chance to see friends, to share stories about summer activities and start fresh in a new classroom with new peers and teachers. Many children embrace the new school year, but it can be a source of anxiety for some students.

Tips for a smooth transition to a new school year

There are many tried-and-true ways to create calm in new environments and activities. Anxiety at the start of the year is no different than anxiety about any new situation. Here is a round-up of tips to help your child get a smooth start to the new year.

- 1. Visit the school.** Walk or ride the route to school to minimize worry about getting there on time and to identify safety issues. Point out crossing guard posts and high-traffic areas. Discuss stranger danger. Try to schedule this tour during a time when the school is open so you can show your child the building.
- 2. Introduce yourself to your child's teacher.** Meeting her teacher in advance can help reduce fear of the unknown. Be sure to ask how he or she prefers to communicate with parents.
- 3. Make homework a priority.** Help your child develop a daily homework habit by designating a consistent place and time to do school work. Discuss problems with school work with your child's teacher.
- 4. Prepare a study area.** Creating a school work space in your home helps your child understand that education is a priority. Be sure to offer praise for good efforts.
- 5. Take charge of TV time.** Limit television time and be aware of what your child is watching. Mature content can be harmful to children, and too much screen time can affect learning.
- 6. Get everyone to bed on time.** Proper rest is essential for academic success and brain development. Transition from summer break by switching sleep schedules to school hours a week before school starts.
- 7. Make healthy meals.** Studies show that balanced nutrition meals contribute to better school performance.
- 8. Get a checkup.** Consider scheduling a physical and eye exam for your child before school starts. Check immunization requirements and be sure to keep copies of updated vaccines for your records.
- 9. Plan to read with your child every day.** Daily reading helps develop literacy skills, sets a great example for children and provides a special time for bonding.

<https://blog.ed.gov/2016/08/9-back-to-school-pro-tips/>

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Tips for teens

A new school year can be trickier for older students. As they claim their independence, they don't need (or want), hands-on logistical help or emotional support. While they may resist advice from parents, here are some peer tips for school success. Share them with your teen as useful reminders or an opening for more discussion about the new year.

Middle School Student (8th grade male)

1. "Try your best. Not everyone can get all As, so it's important to give it your all. As long as it's your best, then you're giving it all you've got."
2. "Don't sleep in class... you may miss something really important, plus you wouldn't be trying your best if you did."
3. "Don't tick off the teacher. That's not a good way to start the school year."
4. "Get to class on time. Be ready and prepared and don't skip class or you'll violate tip #3."
5. "Be nice to people. Treat them like you want to be treated (that includes teachers)."

High School Student (11th grade female)

1. "Don't just start with a positive attitude, keep that attitude throughout the year; it's helpful to your friends and teachers. Also, you'll be more efficient and the year will seem to fly by. Positivity will also help with getting all your work done."
2. "Stay organized. School can be frustrating when you're getting a lot of work and papers, so the easiest way not to get stressed is by keeping everything organized. Have a separate binder for each class; it will make life bearable in high school."
3. "If you're absent for a few days, make sure to get the work you missed. Your teacher is the best one to get you caught up and to explain things to you, because he or she is the expert in the class – not your friends. "
4. "Stay away from the drama. The only bad thing about school is the drama because so many people get sucked into it and it ends up making people feel awful. Drama can take your focus away from your work. If you don't completely focus on the lesson or your homework or even class work you won't understand what is going on. You'll be too focused on what is going on around you. So stay away from drama."
5. "If you are dating someone you may be completely focused on that person... which isn't a bad thing, but it isn't a good thing either... So maybe dating during school isn't the best thing for you academically, but if it isn't affecting you by taking all your attention away from school then everything should be fine. Also, a lot of drama can come along with dating so you'd just have to be aware of that. I suggest not dating or dating but not giving it all your undivided attention, just some attention. Also, this can have an effect on your social life at school and you'll just ditch your friends which isn't what you want during school because they may ditch you when you need them. It is a very complicated life at school. Just make the best out of it."