



## Start Your Back-to-School Plan!

July 2, 2019



It is that time of year again: back-to-school preparation, excitement and first day jitters! The busy-ness of summer is soon to be replaced by the busy-ness of school. As summer begins to wind down we begin to see large, colorful back-to-school displays. Often times these store displays help parents have a mind shift on what you need to do to prepare children for back-to-school routines and schedules. Preparing children for back to school includes helping our children prepare both mentally and physically for the school year ahead.

The [Department of Education](#) and [many other resources](#) offer tips on helping our children enter school the first day ready to learn. It states that whether your summer was jam-packed with activities or filled with complaints about being bored with nothing to do, kids often have a tough time making the back-to-school transition. Below are three strategies to help you and your entire family make a successful transition back to school.

### Sleep

The [American Academy of Pediatrics recommends](#) that children get 10-12 hours of sleep each night. During the summer, families tend to have a more relaxed sleep schedule. However, it is important as the beginning of school draws near that parents begin to shift back into a schedule of earlier bedtimes and wake up times. About two weeks before the start of school begin the new schedule so your child becomes adjusted to the new bedtime and wake up time. A sleepy child can be irritable, grouchy and unfocused. A well-rested child is ready to learn!

### Nutrition

Breakfast has been labeled the [most important meal of the day](#). Breakfast can look different in every household. It can be a bowl of cereal or oatmeal. It can be toast with fruit or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Breakfast can be foods from any culture. But most important, breakfast is food that fuels the body to provide energy and fuels the mind to provide better concentration and problem-solving throughout the day. Children who eat a healthy breakfast score better on tests, complete their work more quickly, and are less likely to have behavior and attention problems.



## **Routines**

Schedules are not meant to be completely set in stone. However, giving some structure to your child's day will help her succeed in school by helping her feel calm and more confident. When a child knows what to expect or knows what is happening next she is then more free to concentrate on the present and learn. Here are some ideas to consider for your daily routines:

- **Morning routines**
  - Lay out clothes the night before
  - Have bags, shoes, coats by the door
  - Make lunches the night before
  - Wake up at a time that allows everyone enough time to get ready (a chaotic morning leads to feeling chaos all day)
- **After-school routines**
  - Make sure your child knows the expectations (ex. Which is first: homework, playtime, snack, etc?)
  - Allow your child some time for a snack, playtime, or downtime
  - Have space set aside for homework and support your child in doing the homework.
- **Evening Routines**
  - Prepare for the next day
  - Lay out clothes for the next day
  - Allow some time to wind down
  - Bath/Shower
  - Brush teeth
  - Read story
  - Lights out
  - Bedtime

With these tips, you and your family should be well on your way to a successful start to the school year!