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ROCK THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL TRANSITION

WRITTEN BY SHAINA ROGERS | PHOTO ADP STUDIO

As summer comes to an end, your family may have a variety of feelings about returning to school. For both children and parents, preparation and creating a good back-to-school routine will help make this transition as seamless as possible.

DEALING WITH FEELINGS

For many families, thinking about the upcoming school year can stir up feelings of great excitement. Thoughts of making new friends, participating in new activities and anticipation of tons of fun will hopefully usher in a positive start to the school year. This is not, however, everyone's experience. It is not uncommon for children to feel nervous about the beginning of the school year, particularly if they are starting a new school or making a big grade transition, from middle school to high school, for instance. If your child's school

offers a sneak peek or open house, attending this event may be helpful. Your child can meet her new teacher there, see her new classroom and potentially meet some of her classmates. This can all help lend familiarity to her new surroundings and hopefully help your child feel more comfortable. Talking through what the school day will look like can also be helpful for your child, so she knows what to expect on her first day.

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Summer can be such a special time for families. Maybe you have explored new places, had wild adventures, and spent quality time together this summer. Without the rush to be up and ready with homework done and bags packed first thing in the morning, it is easy to deviate from your child's normal routine. It is important that, as the start of the school year approaches, your family considers what your child's school day will look like. This may include getting up earlier than your child did during the summer. Allow extra time in the mornings, especially as your family is navigating the back-to-school

transition. It may take more time than you realize, and you don't want your kiddo to miss out on a healthy breakfast, time to use the restroom or time to prepare for the day. It is also important that your child gets to bed early so he can get a good night's sleep. Having a nighttime routine that is calming can be very helpful and can include bath or shower time, brushing and flossing teeth, and reading time. Ideally, your family will start this transition one to two weeks prior to the start of the new school year. A gradual transition in sleep schedule will be much easier on your child compared to an abrupt change. Consistency here is key.

MEDICAL ISSUES

Ensuring your child is medically set up for success at school is also essential. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends keeping your child up-to-date with routine immunizations. This is important for school entry as well as keeping your child safe and healthy. If you have any questions about whether or not your kiddo is up-to-date on her immunizations, please contact your pediatrician. It is critical that your child's school is aware of any serious medical conditions your child may have. If your child has not already had his annual well-child exam, please schedule a visit with his pediatrician. The pediatrician can complete paperwork relating to your child's health condition, such as an Asthma Action Plan if he has asthma or an Allergy Action Plan if he has food allergies. This paperwork will provide guidance for how the school can handle concerns related to your child's medical condition, and will allow the school to keep potentially life-saving medication for your child, should he ever need to use it. Last, if your child has an individualized educational plan (IEP) or 504 plan, the school needs to have an updated copy to ensure he gets the support he needs in school.

FINAL TAKEAWAYS

Most of all, kids need to feel supported and loved, regardless of how well they perform in school. Encourage your child to work hard and do their best. Please also try to be positive about the upcoming year. Children are always watching, and modeling a positive outlook will hopefully set the stage for a wonderful school year. 

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