Before School Starts…

Getting a new school year off to a good start can influence children’s attitude, confidence, and performance both socially and academically. The transition from August to September can be difficult for both children and parents. Even children who are eager to return to class must adjust to the greater levels of activity, structure, and, for some, pressures associated with school life.

The degree of adjustment depends on the child, but parents can help their children (and the rest of the family) manage the increased pace of life by planning ahead, being realistic, and maintaining a positive attitude. Here are a few suggestions to help ease the transition and promote a successful school experience.

✧ **Good physical and mental health.** Schedule doctor and dental checkups early. Discuss any concerns you have over your child’s emotional or psychological development with your pediatrician.

✧ **Review all of the information.** Review the material sent by the school as soon as it arrives. These packets include important information about your child’s teacher, room number, school supply requirements, sign ups for after-school sports and activities, school calendar dates, bus transportation, health and emergency forms, and volunteer opportunities.

✧ **Buy school supplies early.** Try to get the supplies as early as possible and fill the backpacks a week or two before school starts. Some teachers require specific supplies, so save receipts for items that you may need to return later.

✧ **Re-establish the bedtime and mealtime routines.** Plan to re-establish the bedtime and mealtime routines (especially breakfast) at least 1 week before school starts. Prepare your child for this change by talking with your child about the benefits of school routines in terms of not becoming over tired or overwhelmed by school work and activities. Include pre-bedtime reading and household chores if these were suspended during the summer.

✧ **Visit school with your child.** If your child is young or in a new school, visit the school with your child. Meeting the teacher, locating their classroom, locker, lunchroom, etc., will help ease pre-school anxieties and also allow your child to ask questions about the new environment. Call ahead to make sure the teachers will be available to introduce themselves to your child.

✧ **Minimize clothes shopping woes.** Buy only the essentials. Summer clothes are usually fine during the early fall, but be sure to have at least one pair of sturdy shoes. Check with your school to confirm dress code guidelines.

✧ **Select a spot to keep backpacks and lunch boxes.** Designate a spot for your children to place their school belongings as well as a place to put important notices and information sent home for you to see. Explain that emptying their backpack each evening is part of their responsibility, even for young children.

✧ **Freeze a few easy dinners.** It will be much easier on you if you have dinner prepared so that meal preparation will not add to household tensions during the first week of school.

Contact ENCOMPASS for additional tips on making the ‘Back to School’ transition successful!

800-788-8630 or [www.encompass.us.com](http://www.encompass.us.com)

*Information provided by www.nasponline.org*