

BACK TO SCHOOL

It's that time of year again. Time to put away the swimming gear and sunscreen; time to pull out the backpacks and school supplies. It seems like summer vacation ends too quickly, and before you know it the kids are back in school. No matter how short vacations may seem, we hope that your family has had a safe, restful, and most of all, fun summer! Let's take a look at some tips for getting back into the swing of things!

Preparing for "Back to School" After Summer Vacation

By Gary Trock, M.D., and Debbie Adsit, OTR, Beaumont Hospital

Q: My family has had a fun, busy summer. Now that school is just a few weeks away, how can I best prepare my children for their school routine without cutting short their summer fun?



A: "You are smart to realize that after a long summer, most students need to reset their biological clocks. A lack of sleep can adversely affect performance, attention span and physical health," says Gary Trock, M.D., director of pediatric neurology and co-director of Sleep Evaluation Services at Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak. "Parents need to make sure their children go to bed earlier each night."

It's important that students have a period of 10-14 days to readjust. To be effective, it must be a gradual process. Trock also cautions parents not to let their children sleep in on the weekend. This will undo their best attempts to reset their internal clocks for the coming school year. Sunlight exposure each morning is important too.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine offers the following tips to ensure children and teens get a restful night's sleep:

- Follow a consistent bedtime routine.
- Establish a relaxing setting at bedtime.
- Make the bedroom quiet, dark and a little bit cool. Do not have computers or televisions in a bedroom.



- Get up the same time every morning.
- Avoid foods or drinks that contain caffeine, as well as any medication that has a stimulant, before bedtime.
- Don't go to bed hungry, but don't eat a big meal before bedtime.
- Avoid any rigorous exercise within six hours of bedtime.

A Stress-Free Morning Routine

A missed school bus. Forgotten homework. Arguments over outfits. Does all this sound unbearably familiar? Don't worry, you're not alone; almost all parents have experienced some frustration about their child's morning routine. The good news is that a little patience and planning can go a long way toward better school mornings for everyone.

by Connie McCarthy

All parents have, at some point, dealt with mornings where it seemed to take forever to get everyone out the door. And while it might always be a challenge to completely eliminate the rush, a little bit of planning and patience can really help reduce stress.

Make bedtime the same time every night during the school week, even if your child doesn't go to sleep right away. As well, get your child up at the same time Monday through Friday. Plan on your child needing at least 15 to 20 minutes for personal hygiene and dressing.

Allow enough time for a nutritious breakfast. Studies show that children who eat a balanced breakfast do better in school, are more attentive, and are better behaved. A mix of protein and carbohydrates is best. Carbs (cereals, fruits, and breads) give a quick energy boost, and protein (milk, eggs, meat, and peanut butter) sustains your child until lunch.



Prepare backpacks the night before. If your child has homework, make sure she immediately puts it in her backpack upon completion. This eliminates the “My mom forgot to put it in my backpack” excuse!

Try choosing two outfits of clothing the night before that you both agree will work. Put each entire outfit in a large plastic bag and in the morning, let your child choose which “bag” to wear that day, knowing that the clothes in the other bag can be worn the next day. This empowers your child to make choices and usually takes care of two days at a time.

Set aside at least 15 to 20 minutes to read together at bedtime. This can be done by a parent or an older sibling. This short period of individual attention usually calms a child and eliminates the “getting up” questions that often follow just going to bed.

If your child misplaces belongings such as sneakers, for example, try tracing an outline of the sneakers onto construction paper or contact paper. Then tape the tracings to the child’s closet floor. At bedtime each night, make sure the shoes are sitting on their “feet” in the closet. (The same can be done for lunch boxes, backpacks, boots, etc.)

Encourage your child to talk about the upcoming school day. Planning the tasks your child will accomplish will put him in the right frame of mind to tackle the day.

Be patient! The adjustment will take time, but you will get there! Below are some worksheets that may help with establishing routines. These worksheets provide visual cues that will help your child stay on track!

Free Printable Worksheets

<http://www.kidpointz.com/printable-charts/daily-routine-charts/>

<http://www.printablechecklists.com/checklist119.shtml>

<http://www.freeprintablebehaviorcharts.com/daily%20routines.htm>

<http://www.modernparentsmessykids.com/2012/01/we-tried-it-routine-charts.html>

http://www.pricelessparenting.com/Chart-for-Kids.aspx#.U9_ZzPldWSp

