



Spotlight for Parents

101 Back-to-School Tips for Kids and Parents

From organization to homework, here are short and quick expert tips to help you and your children start the new school year right. Liz Alton. CARE.COM— for the entire 101 list go to <http://bit.ly/1J8oUn8>

Here are our highlights from the list.

1. Set your kids' sleep schedules back to "School Time" two weeks before the first day.
2. Reacquaint your kids with the calendar schedule they'll use to manage their activities.
3. Set up weekly meetings to review your kids' schedules for the week(s) ahead.
4. Create a family calendar that tracks everyone's activities and commitments.
5. Refresh your rules about screen time for the school year. What's allowed and when?
6. Determine how long it takes them to do assignments to help with time management.
7. Use an egg timer to get your kids used to focusing for specific periods of time.
8. Teach your kids to prioritize their assignments by making to-do lists with deadlines.
9. Give your kids a short break after each assignment they finish, such as a short walk.
10. Set a regular alarm each day that signals the start of homework time.
11. Discuss what your kids can expect on the first day so they feel more prepared.
12. Visit the school with your kids so they can get familiar with their new environments.
13. Establish a specific space like the family office as the official "homework area."
14. Remove distractions like TVs and video game consoles from homework areas.
15. Help your kids develop a filing system for organizing their documents for each class.
16. Set -- and enforce -- regular *weekday* and *weekend* bedtimes.
17. Keep track of existing extracurricular activities to prevent over-scheduling.
18. Have your kids set realistic goals for the new year, such as reading 30 books.
19. Help your kids prioritize their activities by tying them to their year's goals.
20. Remove things like mobile devices from kids' bedrooms to focus them on sleeping.
21. Figure out different ways you can be involved in the classroom this school year.

Back to School Conversation with the Teacher

If your child is starting a new school, has a teacher that is new to the building, or doesn't know your child, it is a good idea to have a preliminary conversation. Getting everyone off on the right foot is very important. Waiting until the November report card conferences is typically 9-10 weeks into the school year, that is a huge chunk of time to not be sharing important information about your child. If your child is coming from a learning environment that was much different than the one they are in now, the new teacher needs to know this asap. If you feel your child is missing certain skills or knowledge, share your concerns with the new teacher, they will appreciate your insight. This conversation does not have to take place face to face. An email will work just as effectively, and give the teacher something to refer back to. In addition to academic concerns share your feeling on your child's social and emotional needs as well. Does your child have trouble making friends? Are they afraid to ask questions in class? Was their prior learning experience negative, and now they are "restarting" and will need support and kindness? Share your contact information with the teacher and don't hesitate to touch base frequently. Teachers are human, just like you and me. Good teachers are constantly learning and growing in their profession, so things may not always be smooth. Be kind, be patient, ask questions and be involved in your child's academic life.

How Can I Help My Child Succeed in School?



1. Read to or with your child every night.
2. Help your child with his/her homework every night.
3. Do not talk negatively about your child's teachers or about school.
4. Make sure your child is getting plenty of sleep and is ready for school each day.
5. Teach your child to be responsible for their actions and their school work.
6. Stay involved and feel free to contact your child's teacher with any questions or concerns.
7. Ask your child about school everyday and encourage them to discuss the day.



"Books may well be the only true magic."

Alice Hoffman

