

Back to School!

As crazy as it sounds, it's almost time to go **BACK TO SCHOOL** for families in our service areas. With many schools starting within the first few weeks of August, now may be the best time for you and your family to become readjusted to a schedule. Like your children, you may have also used the summer as a break from your typical family habits. You may have allowed relaxed bedtimes, unregulated eating habits, and possibly unmonitored and unlimited screen time (computers, tablets, video games, etc.). While this type of "freedom" can be healthy (in doses) for a child to decompress from a previous school year, it may also cause them to forget what is required when August comes around. As their start date gets closer, you may want to begin preparing your children for what rules and behaviors you expect during the new school year.

We have created a list of ideas and tips to help your family become regulated and prepared for the next nine months. We hope that you can utilize these tools and/or adjust them to fit your family's needs. Here's to a **SUCCESSFUL** and **HEALTHY** 2021-2022 school year!

Ideas and Tips:

1. **Create a first day of school countdown** – This allows for your child to know their exact start date without any surprises. Start telling them when the date is released and then create an official countdown within two to three weeks before that start date.
2. **Begin regulating sleeping habits** – Prepare your child for the time they will need to go to sleep and wake up for school. This allows for their body to adjust to the early hours they may have to wake up in order to get ready, eat breakfast, and travel to school. Make this a gradual process for them within that two to three week time frame.
3. **Monitor and regulate eating habits** – They will soon have to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner at set times. Are their tummies ready for a strict schedule?
4. **Limit "Screen" time** – Homework, reports, studying, and afterschool activities may be the focus once school starts. Make sure they know the time you will give them to access computers and tablets for fun and not just school work.
5. **Talk with your child** – This activity should be continual. Let them share any thoughts they have about going back to school. Throughout the school year, regularly ask them about their day, what they've learned, or anything else they may want to share.
6. **Attend "Meet the Teacher" nights** – Some schools allow for parents and their children to tour the classroom and meet the teachers they will work with over the school year. This is an awesome opportunity to connect with the person who will spend a great amount of time in your child's life. You may also be able to share any concerns you may have.
7. **Prepare for travel arrangements** – Some students take the bus, some carpool, and others may walk or ride a bike. How is your child traveling to and from school? Are they prepared? Do you need to test out timing in order to arrive at school on time? You and your family should create and know the plan.