

School Transitions

A smooth transition back to school is very important for student success. It influences a child's attitude and confidence which play an important part in social and academic performance.

The start of a new school year is often very exciting for children. However, change often brings about stress, even when it is positively anticipated. This anxiety is natural and to be expected anytime you start something new. Most children will experience short-term adjustment difficulties as the pace of life quickens and the pressure of learning a new system of expectations, structure, social relationships, and more are placed upon them. The degree of adjustment depends on the child.

Parents can help their child positively adjust to this new change. Children will typically be less anxious when they know what to expect and feel that they have some control over what will happen. By planning ahead, establishing routines, being realistic, and maintaining a positive attitude, parents can promote healthy adjustment and make going back to school a pleasurable experience.

For most children, the initial stress at the start of the school year will subside without requiring significant support. However, there are some children who may experience a level of stress that is more intense and longer lasting which interferes with school functioning. Signs of more serious difficulty include acting out behaviors, withdrawal, sleep problems, increased anger or anxiety, and refusal to attend school. If serious difficulty persists, seek out the assistance of school professionals, such as your school psychologist, school social worker or school counselor early in the school year.

Create an Efficient Morning!

- Make meals easy. Prepare lunches for the next day while fixing dinner. Have the table set for breakfast the night before and avoid foods that take a long time to prepare.
- Make sure that your child has his/ her backpack packed the day before. A perfect routine for this can be established right after your child completes nightly homework.
- Check the weather the night before and have your child's clothes laid out prior to going to bed.
- Get up 20 minutes before your child and allow yourself to ease into the morning. Drink coffee, read the newspaper, take a shower or do whatever to get into a relaxed state.
- Teach your child to use an alarm clock. Praise independent use of it.



- Create a simple checklist that outlines each task your child needs to complete each morning.
- Make use of a timer and have your child try to beat the clock. Make it fun. Set a goal with your child with a reward or privilege to be earned for successfully reaching it.
- Store needed items like brushes or hair bands in your morning gathering place such as the kitchen or dining room. This lessens bathroom congestion and allows for some tasks to be completed while having breakfast.
- If not taking the bus, set up a carpool to serve as extra motivation to get going earlier.

