

BACK TO SCHOOL FEATURE

Once the stores begin echoing their "Back to School" ads, we know that the new school year is growing near. It is a wonderful time of year which offers all of us a fresh start with changes in routines, teachers, and classrooms, as well as new clothes, school bags, and supplies! The new school year does not have to equal new anxiety and new stress.

Remember that being prepared and helping our children become prepared and to know what to expect is half the battle. Young children always look to their parents for cues when changes in routine occur. You should try to maintain a good, positive attitude, and be as organized as possible.

Three helpful hints for getting the new school year off with ease:

Practice. Re-adjust your and your children's summer time schedules by making small changes in going to bed and waking earlier. Try to get as much done with your child for the next day prior to going to sleep. Practice planning ahead and being organized. Children learn what is modeled to them, so model organization and preparedness at every age. Things will come up, but for the most part you will have a finely tuned routine to start the new school year off just right!

Visit ahead of time. Prior to your child's first day of school, try to get him familiar with his new setting. Visit his classroom and "hang out" for a while, this will ease the transition greatly. Your child may choose to bring something to school that offers comfort when he is feeling insecure. Check with your child's teacher and send something that helps him feel connected to home, and gives him that extra nurturing he needs until he sees you at the end of the day.

Make a date. Find a child or a small group of children who will be in your child's class and get together for a back to school party. Even if it is a small play group and snowballs after, this will help your children feel bonded to someone, and again ease their transitional stage.

Embrace this new school year with your child!