



U.S. Public Health Service

Nursing -TIP OF THE MONTH

September 2019

Back to School



Back-to-School

Back to school season is right around the corner, and there is a lot to be done to get kids ready to go back to school. The transition from summer to school can be very hectic and difficult to navigate. So, we have provided some tips and resources to help prepare for a successful school year.

General Back-to-School Tips

- **Reach out to your child(ren)'s teachers:** Attend welcome events and introduce yourself. Find out how each teacher prefers to communicate.
- **Get in the groove:** Establish healthy at-home routines for school days, such as consistent waking times and getting-ready patterns. Set bedtimes that allow elementary-age kids to get 10 to 12 hours of sleep; teens should get 8½ to 9½ hours.
- **Pack smart:** Make sure your child's backpack never weighs more than 10 to 20 percent of his body weight; heavy packs can strain developing muscles and joints. Encourage your child to use both straps, and tighten them so the pack hangs close to the body, about two inches above your child's waist.
- **Be Prepared:** it's important to have an [emergency care plan](#) and to practice that plan as often as needed. Update emergency contact information. Make an emergency card for your child to keep in their back pack. And help your child to memorize important phone numbers and addresses (when able).

Elementary Age Tips

- **Encourage reading:** It's the single most important thing that you can do to help your child succeed in school. Read with your child right from the start, and make sure there are lots of reading materials in the house.
- **Talk with your child:** Talking and listening are major components of children's school success. By having many opportunities to use and hear spoken language, children are given a tremendous advantage, picking up the language skills they will need to do well in school.
- **Monitor homework:** Help your child get organized and provide a quiet place in the home to study. Limit the amount of time your child spends watching television, surfing the Internet, and playing video games.
- **Encourage your child to be responsible and work independently:** Make it clear to your child that he or she has to take responsibility for actions both at home and at school.

Early Adolescence Tips

- **Connect with your child at school and at home:** Talk with your child often about what is most important to him or her. Youth who feel engaged and supported at school and at home are less likely to experience negative health outcomes later in life ([Adolescent Connectedness, CDC](#))
- **Set Ground Rules:** Set ground rules early in the school year for homework, behavior, attendance, internet usage, etc. Hold your child to high, but realistic, standards.
- **Health and safety come first:** Parents and schools have a role to play in helping adolescents establish healthy behaviors. It is important to model good behavior, establish open communication about at risk behaviors, and be alert to major problems.
- **Hang in there when times are tough:** Early adolescence can be a difficult time for children and parents. Adolescents are feeling insecure in their identity and parents often feel unprepared for the challenges that occur. Provide both unconditional love and appropriate limits to help your child thrive and feel safe.

For more information, please visit the following websites: [Growing up with vaccines](#) review the [CDC immunization schedule for school age kids](#), Agency for Children and Families – [Head Start Program School Readiness](#) [Helping Your Child through Early Adolescence, U.S. DOE](#); [Back to School Tips, U.S. DOE](#); [Back to School - Teens, CDC](#); [Nine CDC Health Hacks for Back-to-School Success](#); [Helping Your Child Succeed in School, U.S. DOE](#) [Federal Commission on School Safety](#)



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