

WFWP USA: From Summer Mode to School Days: Tips to Tackle the Transition

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As summer starts winding down and fall is beginning to unfurl, many of us are also getting into "Back to School" season. Maybe you have young kids who are preparing to go back to school or little ones getting ready for their very first day of school. Or maybe you have older kids who are transitioning into a brand new high school or middle school. Whatever the case may be, there are some great tips to help get back to school, either physically, emotionally, or mentally. Here are some recommendations from other families in similar situations.

Establishing Routines

One of the more challenging things about going back to school is starting a new routine. Or getting

back into the previous one! I know I speak for myself when I say that the summer schedule of waking and bedtime starts to get really loose. And it's hard to get back on track!

A smooth morning routine starts with a solid bedtime routine. A week or two before the first day of school, start making sure kids' bedtimes are moving closer and closer to the bedtime they will need to have during the school year. You can try moving it up by 5 minutes over a period of several nights. Discuss with them beforehand what will be happening and why to hopefully minimize tears and power struggles. Try doing a "practice run" one morning with a special treat afterwards!

Over at [Mother U](#), you can check out more great tips, like preparing for kids who get ready quickly versus slowly in the morning. There are also some fun printables to help with getting school routines back on track. And don't forget to give yourself some slack! The first week or so might be less than perfect. You can focus on congratulating and praising your kids (and yourself!) for what did go well.

Getting Organized

A big part of getting ready for a new school year is getting all the things you need in order. Personally, I like to check in with my kids beforehand what they do and don't like for lunch. Their tastes seem to be constantly changing! It can be a great relationship building activity to listen to their desires while also discussing making balanced and healthy choices. Check out this guide from [Yummy Toddler Food](#) on school lunch ideas, both "typical" and creative.

Every school will provide a school supply list appropriate for their grade, but you can also involve your kids in picking out and organizing their school supplies for the year. The day or night before the first day of school can be a time to organize and label their supplies together. This also can help increase their excitement, decrease anxiety, as they feel empowered to be ready and prepared.

Our kids may want the newest - and most expensive - things but that doesn't always work for the family

budget, especially if you have more than one kid. Consider getting your kids involved in the process of estimating the total cost, choosing where to go shopping to find good deals, and allowing them to pick out certain items within budget - such as a new pencil case or lunch box.

Heart-to-Heart Conversations

Even if all the external things are taken care of, there can still be a sense of trepidation or anxiety about the first day of school. They are entering a new grade. Or maybe your child will be the new kid at school. Or there might be some worries about what a new school will be like. Open conversations about what they are thinking about or their concerns or questions will help to allay some of that fear. Fear of the unknown might not disappear, but from heart-to-heart dialogue with you, they can be reminded that they are loved and supported no matter what the future brings.

If your kids are like mine, they don't readily open up if I ask directly, "Are you worried about school?" My 9-year-old is most likely just to give me a one word answer. "No." However, I've found the conversations flow more readily over a book on the topic. I ask about what the characters in the story might be feeling. Or ask if he thinks he will experience something like that. There are a lot of great books for kids and parents on the topic!

[Brightly](#) provides an extensive list of books for kids and parents on preparing for school. Books focus not just on what to expect during the first day of school, for first-time school-goers, but also some of the social and emotional readiness skills. Such as being a good friend or dealing with separation anxiety.

You can also check out some conversation starters, for little ones or older kids entering high school, online such as this one from [Big Brothers, Big Sisters](#). Having a few questions in your "back pocket" can help with bringing up the topic of school in an engaging way.

As the new school year approaches, remember that every family's journey looks a little different, and that's okay. Whether you're adjusting routines, organizing supplies, or navigating big emotions, what matters most is showing up with love, patience, and a little flexibility. Give yourself and your kids grace in the process. You're building not just good habits, but lasting connection and confidence that will carry them far beyond the first day of school. You've got this!