

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year! *Back To School*

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One of my favorite commercials of all time is that old Staples commercial where the dad pushes the shopping cart, dancing in the aisles, and the kids walk slowly, sad that summer is over. The music of the classic holiday favorite accompanies the scene.

Times have changed since then. Not all families spend all summer together with their children. Often both parents continue to work during the summer and arrange for their children to participate in various activities. This summer families may have gone on vacations together, taken day trips or simply made adventures in the neighborhood or backyard. Whatever the situation, most parents are happy when school is back in session.

So, how do we keep this “most wonderful” feeling lasting longer into the school year? One way is to maintain predictability and routines. Most people view the start of a new school year as a fresh start; a clean slate or even a do-over of a year that did not go well. There are many new things associated with the first day of school; teacher(s), backpacks, lunch boxes, school supplies, clothes and for some, even entire schools. If your family has a home routine that has worked for your children, make sure to keep it up. If not, consider accepting the challenge of putting one into place.

*Morning routine: regular wake-up time is important, allowing ample time to eat a healthy breakfast, get dressed and ready, and get to school on time.

*Homework routine: personal work space with necessary supplies. Choose a time every day that works with your child/family and stick to it. Encourage organization: folders by class, and a special place for completed work so your child knows where it is.

*Chore routine: having chores teaches responsibility no matter what age. Post daily chores with a place to mark completion and reward/payment.

*Bedtime routine: kids need at least eight hours of sleep per night, even high school seniors. Help alleviate stress by knowing where clothes, shoes, backpacks, keys, etc, are the night before.

Having a routine will help get the whole family off to a great start to the school year.