

Back to School Preparations

As the new school year approaches, getting prepared for the first day means a checklist of important things to do but also mentally and emotionally preparing for the transition back to school. The transition is often filled with a mixture of emotions, feelings of excitement and nervous anticipation. Helping kids to understand their emotions and teaching them to communicate how they feel will help to jumpstart a great new school year.



Important things on your checklist for getting ready for school include an annual well child checkup with your pediatrician. Be sure to ask for any required immunizations, forms, medication refills and include a sports physical if your child plans to play sports. It's important to discuss any medical or mental health concerns including illness, injuries, school concerns, academic problems or mental health concerns. Mental health challenges can significantly impact the ability to learn and focus on school. Take the time to make a list of needs and concerns ahead of your appointment.

Mental preparation for back to school for kids can include completing the important tasks but also taking into consideration the things that affect mental health including sleep, routines, expectations and support.

Four Steps for Back to School: Mental Health Checklist

1. Create a routine.

- Transition back to a school year bedtime (we all stay up late in the summer!) starting 1-2 weeks before school begins by moving bedtime and wake up time back about 15 minutes per day.
- Practice the morning get ready routine (such as getting ready for the bus at a certain time).
- Remember to include daily physical activity and nutrition, as they're important to academic success.

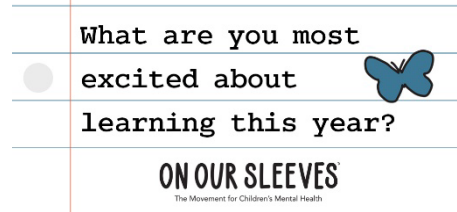
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| 1. ___ |
| 2. ___ |
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2. Help them prepare.

- Review daily and school schedules.
- Create a family calendar for everyone to see what's happening, including school activities, sports/practices and family plans.
- Attend school orientations and open houses to see the layout of the school and have an opportunity to meet the teachers and administrators which will help them feel more confident on their first day of school.

3. Discuss expectations.

- Find a relaxed time for both you and your child, maybe after dinner or another quiet time, to sit down.
- Ask them what their goals are for the upcoming year.
- Remind them of any expectations that you have including rules around homework, screen time, social media, etc.



4. Create an environment of support.

- Practice encouraging your child to express their feelings by reflecting back to them what you hear them saying.
- Listen to what they're saying and emphasize caring for their mental health is crucial to caring for their overall health (and it's normal to seek support when needed just like you would when feeling sick).
- Discuss with them whom they can reach out to when they need support.
- Remember to check in throughout the school year and listen for changes in how they act or what they're saying.

For more information, visit: <https://kidsmentalhealthfoundation.org/mental-health-resources/school>



[BayCareKidsOnOurSleeves.org](https://www.baycarekidsourosleeves.org)