



CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION
A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition
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August 5, 2009 – Be Ready When School Starts!

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Whether getting into a school routine for the first time or getting back into one after a busy summer, beginning a few weeks before school starts aids with adjustment. The whole family needs to be ready in order for a smooth transition into the school year. Some suggestions include:

- Start moving to an earlier bedtime if your child has been staying up later and later. A gradual shift is easier than an abrupt change.
- Make mealtimes more regular and aligned with the school schedule.
- Start to put limits on the amount of time spent on TV, computer, and other electronics. Parents can set a good example and perhaps entice children into joining with them to play a board game, read and/or get some exercise together.
- Emphasize the positive aspects of school during talks with your child. Is she looking forward to learning interesting things? Is he looking forward to meeting friends, both old and new?
- Help dispel anxieties about a new grade or new school by listening to your child's feelings. Check your school district's website for information. Perhaps you want to arrange a visit to the school. Plan to attend any summer social opportunities the school provides. Young children may enjoy going to the school playground with you.
- Confirm any after-school arrangements you have made and be sure your child knows about them.
- Make an emergency plan in case you need a back-up person to help pick up your child if he or she gets sick or misses the school bus. Make sure your child is aware of that person and that the school office gets this information when you complete your emergency card at the start of school. They will want to know the person's name, telephone number, and relationship to your child.
- Prepare to complete back-to-school paperwork that will include emergency permission forms, health insurance information, and other important information that they may keep on file for your child.
- Confirm transportation arrangements: what time will the school bus come in the morning? Where is your child's bus stop? What time will your child either come home on the bus or be picked up from the after school care setting?

For that first day of school:

- Set the alarm for a wake-up time that allows plenty of time for you and your child to get ready.
- Work with your child to pick out the next day's clothes.
- Start the morning of the first day with a good breakfast and convey cheerful confidence in your child.
- Back-to-school time is a great time for family traditions that celebrate an exciting new stage in your family's development! Some families take a photograph of each child on the first morning of school

standing in a special spot, ready to go. This is a great way to record growth and share memories as you look back over those photos!

For more information, check out this website: www.greatschools.net.

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