



**CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION**  
*A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition*  
*Supported By Centre County Drug and Alcohol*



**August 26, 2009 – Make a Great Start to Your Child’s School Year**

Kate McGrail-Peasley is a Wingate Elementary School Counselor with Bald Eagle Area School District. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County Communities That Care serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region Communities That Care serving the State College Area School District.

Most children are naturally excited at the beginning of a new school year. There will be new classrooms, new books and a new teacher! Smart parents take advantage of this fresh start to make a few changes in the routine at home too. To ensure that your child has the best school year ever consider the following suggestions:

**Establish bedtimes** and homework routines. Pick a time for your child to do homework and go to bed. Start these routines a week or two before school starts to ease the transition. Homework time can be spent reading a book, writing and illustrating a story or solving math problems and puzzles.

**Start your morning routine the night before.** To avoid or at least lessen the hectic morning rush, help your child choose their clothes and pack their lunch before bed. Gather and set by the door all backpacks, homework, signed papers and shoes. Decide about breakfast.

**Provide the supplies.** Let your child go with you to pick out new school supplies. This will help to get him or her excited about school.

**Set the rules.** Make sure your kids know what to expect now that they are back in school. Along with specific bedtimes and homework times, decide on limits for TV watching and set aside time for reading each day. Make a chart for the first few weeks of school—until routines become established. Give your child a gold star on days when he/she does everything without being asked. And celebrate your child’s success at the end of the week with a small treat or activity.

**Stay positive.** Show some enthusiasm for the new school year. Before school starts, remind your child of all the friends they will see and the fun they will have in school. After the school year begins, be genuinely interested in their school work. Ask about school every day and have them teach you what they have learned. Say at least one positive thing to your child each day. This helps to build their confidence and improve their chances of success at school and in life.

**Help ease any first-day-of-school jitters.** A few of the most common worries are “What if I don’t get to school on time?” Some planning the night before and establishing a morning routine will help eliminate some of those last minute dashes to the school bus. “Will I like my teacher?” Try sitting down with your child and write a letter of introduction to the new teacher. Let your child decide what they want their teacher to know about

them. “What if I forget which bus to get on?” You might want to write the bus number on a small card that you attach to your child’s backpack. And remind her that her teacher knows which bus she rides too.

**Insist that your child try** hard to be a good student. If school is important to you, it will be important to him/her.

Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care*  
*Serving State College Area School District*  
Dawn Taylor, Community Mobilizer, 814-237-6191  
dtaylor105@gmail.com  
Web address: [carecentreregion.org](http://carecentreregion.org)

Centre County *Communities That Care*  
*Serving the School Districts of Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and*  
*Philipsburg-Osceola*  
Elizabeth Eckley, Community Mobilizer, 814-404-9511  
centrecountyctc@yahoo.com  
Web address: [centrecountyctc.org](http://centrecountyctc.org)