

# Starting 'Back to School' Routines

## Tips for Parents



This fall is different than the other years of getting ready for school to start. We've all been home longer, with each other more, and maybe been doing less out of the home than we used to.

It can be difficult to get back into the swing of things and it is easy to feel frustrated when it doesn't feel as easy as it used to. Here are some ideas to consider:

- 1 Start adding routines back in sooner rather than later.**  
Change bedtimes, wake up times, and mealtimes over a few weeks, if possible. Small changes are easier to adjust to changes that happen all at once. Changing one thing at a time is often easier than changing many things at one time.
- 2 Pick one day a week to plan.**  
Pick whichever day makes sense to look ahead at least one week to prepare for games, activities, projects, appointments, work schedules, pick-ups/drop-offs, and shopping lists. This will help avoid last minute scrambling because of that dentist appointment you forgot about today, or having to run to the store for that one thing you forgot.
- 3 Make one of your evening routines going through what is needed for tomorrow.** Gather what is needed and put it all in one place so it's easier to remember.
- 4 Use visuals.**  
Put reminders up for things you or your family tend to forget and calendars where everyone can see them. You can also try online family calendars. You are never too old for a picture chart of what you need to have with you (and laughing at yourself when you're looking at one is not a bad way to start your morning!)
- 5 Leave extra time to get there.**  
This will reduce stress around getting there, will allow for having to deal with last minute issues, and maybe even just sitting down for a minute and enjoying a small break.
- 6 Schedule sleep and play time and make them a priority.**  
Sleep is important to being your best self and doing your best. Filling your own bucket is important if you want to have anything to give to the people you care about and care for.
- 7 For those who work from home and must now balance that with taking family members to and from school: remember to schedule bathroom and meal breaks.**  
Our brains, eyes and bodies need those breaks to move around and stop staring at screens.
- 8 Be kind to yourself and others.**  
Remember that you don't know what someone else's day looks like, and they don't know about yours. We are all doing our best each day. Forgive yourself for forgetting, not finishing, being out of sorts, running late occasionally, and forgive others of the same.