

Back to School: Ready, Set, Go!

By Cathy Albrecht, Kindergarten Teacher

Being ready for the beginning of school involves looking at a few different components. One involves the physical tools needed, such as school supplies and a space to organize belongings. The other involves the emotional side, which would include worries about heading back to school.

Here are a few ideas to help with both of these issues.

Get Organized

- Have a place set aside for backpacks, and check them daily.
- Have a central area to keep school communications and calendars.
- Plan a homework area for older students.
- Keep a bin or basket full of supplies like pencils, erasers and markers.

Establish Routines

- Begin moving bedtime up if needed.
- Avoid stimulating activities such as TV and video games 30 – 60 minutes before bedtime.
- Start getting up earlier in the mornings.
- Once school begins, have clothes laid out and backpack ready the night before.

Foster Independence

- For younger children, make sure they can manipulate clothing.
- Have kids help look at the calendar and plan what will be needed for each day (library books, proper PE shoes, etc.).
- Older kids can help plan and pack school lunches.

Listen to Worries

- Acknowledge your child's worries and fears (avoid saying, "Don't worry...it'll be fine.")
- Practice what to do in different situations that are worrying your child (how to find someone to play with, what to do if you can't find a classroom, etc.).
- Remind your child of how they have handled social situations successfully in the past.
- Try to visit the school or meet the teacher ahead of time...many schools offer an Open House.