

# ***IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR...***

## ***BACK TO SCHOOL!***



**There is a lot of stress and change that take place as the kids return to the school.**

**Here are ways to make the transition a little less stressful!**

### **Establish a routine early**

Routines make life easier for kids because they know what to expect and they experience less stress when they know what to expect.

Start transitioning into the new school-time routine a week or two before school starts. This allows everyone (parents and kids) to practice the new routine and not be surprised with major changes the day before school starts.

### **Get enough sleep**

Sleep is always important, but it's even more important when school is in session. Kids need to be rested to have the energy to learn. The CDC recommends that children ages 6-12 sleep 9-12 hours each night and teens sleep 8-10 hours per night.

It's also important for parents to get enough sleep (7+ hours/night per CDC), so they are able to handle the stresses of the new school year too!

### **Nutrition**

Just like sleep, nutrition is always important and it's also necessary for children to have energy to learn. The CDC recommends that every meal consist of fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. It can be challenging to get kids to try new foods (especially veggies), but just keep offering new foods for them to try, along with the foods they already enjoy.

The CDC also recommends that empty calories from sugars be limited (ex. limiting sodas, ice cream, and other sweet treats).

### **Help your child manage stress**

Any change can bring stress, but new school years often bring additional stress. Ask your child about his/her day. *(Try something simple: What did you like about today? What did you not like about today?)* Give them an opportunity to express their feelings (both positive and negative feelings) and give them your full and undivided attention while you talk with them about their day.

### **Be prepared for tantrums/grumpiness**

There are definitely going to be hard times. There will be tears and grumpiness and frustration.

Parents: Be patient. Take a deep breath. Think before you act (or react). Model appropriate frustration management.

Help your child walk through those feelings and assist them in finding and developing appropriate solutions for their struggles. (It's even ok for you to ask for help to help your child with their struggles...in case you needed reminder.)

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If you are struggling with life stressors that are more than you can handle alone, seek help. Talk to a friend or someone you trust. Call our office or another mental health provider to set an appointment. Do you want you need to do to take care of yourself. You don't have to do this alone.