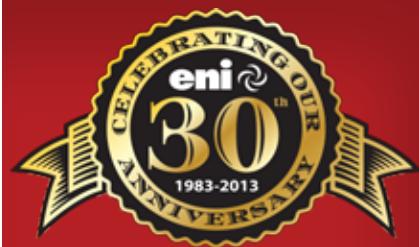




BalanceWorks® Newsletter



August 2013 | Written by the work/life experts at eni



Back to School

Although summer is still in full swing, back to school time is just around the corner. It helps to begin transitioning children back into a structured routine a few weeks before the school year begins. Many kids and teens get used to sleeping in, staying up later, no homework or studying, more time spent playing outside, watching TV, and hanging out with friends, that jumping right back into the school routine can be quite a shock. Luckily, there are many steps you can take to make the transition as smooth as possible both prior to the year beginning and at the start of the school year.

Before the Year Begins

Reinstitute Normal Routines – Establish age appropriate bedtimes and wake up times based on your children's school schedule and have them follow these routines at least 2 weeks before the start of the school year. It takes the body some time to adjust to a new sleep routine, so with some practice falling asleep and waking up on time, your children will not be tired when the school year starts. It also helps to establish regular bath or shower times and have kids stick to these schedules prior to the school year as well. Finally, start practicing daily bedtime routines,

set up a timeline for brushing teeth, having a glass of water, reading a story, etc.

Discuss Transitions – Speak with your children about the changes that will occur when the school year begins. Furthermore, if the upcoming school year represents a big change, like starting kindergarten, moving from elementary to middle school or starting high school, be sure to talk to your children about the expectations, opportunities, and workload of their upcoming advanced grade level.

Go Shopping – Each grade level provides a list of school supplies that are needed for the school year. Buy these supplies before the year begins to ensure your children are ready for all of their classroom demands from day 1. It's also a good idea to scan the newspaper for ads and coupons leading up to the start of the school year as many stores have great back to school promotions.

Gather Information – If your children are in Elementary school, find out who their teacher will be. You can also have your child call their friends to see who is in their class. Discuss how it is not the end of the world if their best friend is not in their class, but rather a great

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1.800.327.2255

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opportunity to make new friends and have more play dates! Some school districts mail out high school schedules before the start of the school year. If your child's district does this, take advantage of it by researching and explaining the general concepts that will be taught in their classes. This may help calm their nerves regarding upcoming coursework.

Plan Fall Activities – Discuss which activities your children are interested in for the upcoming school year. If they are unsure, you can review available options with them. The options may be more limited in elementary school, but there are a wide variety of sports, clubs, and extracurricular activities available to students in middle and high school. It is important to avoid over-scheduling activities. While children benefit from daily exercise and activity, they also need a break from the hustle and bustle of the chaotic school day and benefit from quality family time.

Take Care of You – The school year can be hectic, so it's important to take a day or two to yourself before all the hustle and bustle begins. Between after school activities, parent-teacher conferences, and helping with homework, there is often limited time to make a healthy dinner. Research some healthy crock-pot dinners, which will be ready to eat whenever you are and some healthy "30 minute meals", which are ready in a flash, so you will be ready with healthy, delicious and quick dinner recipes when the school year starts. Finally, recruit help if you suspect that you will be overbooked when the school year begins. Divide homework, dinner, laundry, and bedtime responsibilities with a spouse or partner, call on your parents or siblings for assistance, or set up a carpool schedule with fellow parents.

When the Year Begins

When the school actually begins follow these simple steps to make it the most stress free year yet:

- Have children pick out clothes the night before
- Pack school lunches the night before
- Have plenty of simple options for breakfast – cereal, yogurt, hard boiled eggs, etc...
- Designate a specific time and place for homework
- Have dinner as a family at least 4 times a week to catch up on the school day and anything new that may be going on or any school related concerns your child may have
- Start a folder for any school related information, so you have easy access to it
- Write all school related events on a large calendar that the whole family has access to
- Remember to still leave time for your children to have fun, they are kids after all!!

With some thoughtful preparation and by following the guidelines above, you and your children should have a great school year!

Remember that eni's clinicians are available 24/7 to assist your children with school related issues including bullying or adjusting to a new grade level. Our Personal Assistants are also available to research and provide information on after-school care, homework tips, and a wide array of other school related topics!

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