

TO-DO CHECKLIST *for* BACK 2 SCHOOL

Kids often have a tough time making the back-to-school transition. This checklist is helpful to get prepared for the start of school and alleviate stress for children and parents/guardians.

BATTLING THE BUTTERFLIES

Give kids time to adjust and focus on the positive things about going back to school, such as hanging out with friends, meeting new classmates, and getting involved in activities.

After school, it's especially beneficial for parents to be home at the end of the school day for the first week. But many working parents don't have that flexibility. Instead, try to arrange your evenings so you can give kids as much time as they need, especially during those first few days.

To help ease back-to-school butterflies, try to ease kids into a consistent school-night routine a few weeks before school starts.

- ✓ Get enough sleep (set a reasonable bedtime).
- ✓ Eat a healthy breakfast (they're more alert and do better in school).
- ✓ Write down the need-to-know info such as locker combination, what time classes and lunch start and end, their homeroom and classroom numbers, teachers' and/or bus drivers' names.
- ✓ Use a wall calendar or personal planner to record when assignments are due, tests will be given, and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Have them organize homework and set out clothes the night before.

Some kids develop real physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomachaches, at the start of school. If you're concerned that your child's worries go beyond the normal back-to-school jitters and you see concern for other psychological issues, speak with your child's doctor, teacher, or school counselor.

WHAT TO WEAR, BRING, AND EAT

- ✓ Does the school have a dress code?
- ✓ Will kids need a change of clothes for PE or art?
- ✓ Do your kids have a safe backpack that's lightweight, with two wide, padded shoulder straps, a waist belt, padded back, and multiple compartments?
- ✓ Will your kids buy lunch at school or bring it from home? If they buy a school lunch, how much will it cost per day or per week?
- ✓ Do you have a weekly or monthly menu of what will be served? Is there an account number that they need to remember?
- ✓ Have you stocked up on all of the necessary school supplies? (Letting kids pick out a new lunchbox and a set of pens, pencils, binders, etc., helps get them geared up for going back to school.)

MEDICAL ISSUES

- ✓ Have your kids had all necessary immunizations?
- ✓ Have you filled out any forms that the school has sent home, such as emergency contact and health information forms?
- ✓ Do the school nurse and teachers know about any medical conditions your child has, such as food allergies, asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that may need to be managed during the school day?
- ✓ Have you made arrangements with the school nurse to give any medicines your child might need?
- ✓ Do the teachers know about any conditions that may affect how your child learns?

TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

- ✓ Do you know what time school starts and how your kids will get there?
- ✓ If they're riding the bus, do you know where the bus stop is and the time/location they'll be picked up and dropped off?
- ✓ Are there any regulations on bicycles or other vehicles, such as scooters? Also remember to wear a helmet and have the proper safety equipment.
- ✓ Have you gone over traffic safety information, stressing the importance of crossing at the crosswalk (never between parked cars or in front of the school bus), waiting for the bus to stop before approaching it, and understanding traffic signals and signs?
- ✓ If your child walks or bikes to school, have you mapped out a safe route? Does your child understand that it's never OK to accept rides, candy, or any other type of invitation from strangers?

WHAT ABOUT AFTER SCHOOL?

Figuring out where kids will go after school can be a challenge, especially if both parents work. Depending on a child's age and maturity, you may need to arrange for after-school transportation and care.

Getting involved in after-school activities:

- ✓ Productive alternative to watching TV or playing video games.
- ✓ Provides some adult supervision when parents can't be there.
- ✓ Helps develop kids' interests and talents.
- ✓ Introduces kids to new people and helps them develop their social skills.
- ✓ Gives kids a feeling of involvement.
- ✓ Keeps kids out of trouble.

Make sure after-school commitments allow kids enough time to complete school assignments. Keep an eye on their schedules to make sure there's enough time for both schoolwork and home life.

Source: kidshealth.org