

## Back to School Helping Your Child Get Ready

The first day of school can be very stressful for children. Is your child ready? The tips below will help you prepare your child and ensure a smooth transition into a productive school year.

### Ease Their First-Day Fears

- Remind your child that he is not the only kid who is nervous about the first day.
- Point out the positives of starting school, such as seeing old friends and making new ones.
- Pair your child up with a neighborhood 'buddy' with whom he can walk to school or ride the bus.
- Walk or drive your child to and from school on the first day if possible to help keep him calm.

### Keep Them Safe

- Keep backpacks at a maximum of 10-20% of body weight and make sure they're worn with both shoulder straps. If your child has to carry an especially heavy load, consider a rolling backpack, but remember that they still have to be carried up the stairs.
- Make sure your child uses the proper safety restraints on the school bus (when available) and in the car on the way to and from school; children should be seated in a car safety seat or belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seatbelt fits properly. Be sure to check your state's laws regarding car safety seats.
- If your child bikes to and from school, make sure he wears a helmet, wears bright colors to increase visibility, and knows and obeys the rules of the road.
- If your child walks to school, make sure the route is safe and that he knows the way to and from school. Consider a 'walking school bus' where one adult accompanies a group of neighborhood children walking to and from school.

### Provide a Nutritious Lunch

- Most schools send home lunch menus in advance. Use the menu as a planning tool so you can pack your child's lunch on days when the meal provided at school is something he would prefer not to eat.

- Ask your child's school to stock healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, low-fat dairy products, water, and 100% fruit juice in vending machines.
- Pack water, milk, or juice in your child's lunch instead of a soft drink. One soft drink contains about 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories!

### Support Good Study Habits

- Create an environment that is conducive to learning by providing your child with a permanent work space somewhere in the house, whether in the child's bedroom or in another room that offers privacy.
- Set aside enough time for your child to complete assignments.
- Turn the TV off during homework time. Make it a house rule!
- Monitor computer and internet usage.
- Be available for assistance and guidance, but never do your child's homework for him or her.
- Schedule breaks in order to alleviate eye, neck, and brain fatigue. Let your child come to a good 'stopping point' before each break.
- If your child seems to be struggling academically, speak with the teacher and seek the help of a tutor if necessary.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics - [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)