

PARENTS GUIDE BACK TO SCHOOL

September 2024





Returning to school is a significant period where families must prepare thoughtfully to ensure a smooth and successful transition. It is often filled with excitement and anxiety for both students and parents.

This guide offers guidelines for effective preparation, including addressing emotional or health-related concerns, re-establishing routines, and discussing new academic challenges.

Establishing a Back-to-School Routine

Establishing a back-to-school routine is essential for ensuring your child's physical and mental well-being.

By incorporating daily physical activity and a consistent sleep schedule, you can help them stay active, healthy, and well-rested for the school year ahead.



Creating a Morning Routine

A successful day starts with a structured beginning. Establishing a routine can make mornings run more smoothly.

Start by waking your child up at the same time every day, and creating a sequence of activities such as:



- Going to the toilet



- Brushing their teeth



- Getting dressed



- Having breakfast

Establishing a Back-to-School Routine



Physical Activity Routine

Set a daily schedule that includes at least 30 minutes of physical activity to help your child stay active and healthy.

Examples of indoor activities include:

Swimming and indoor rock climbing.



Sleep Routine

Gradually adjust bedtimes and wake-up times a few weeks before school to ensure your child gets enough sleep.

For example, set a bedtime at 8 PM and wake-up time at 7 AM.

Remember that children of different ages require different amounts of sleep:

- Pre-schoolers (3-5 years old): 10-13 hours per night.
- School-age children (6-12 years old): 9-12 hours per night.
- Teenagers (13-18 years old): 8-10 hours per night.

Establishing a Back-to-School Routine



Personal Hygiene Routine

Encourage personal hygiene tasks such as bathing, brushing teeth, and hand washing as needed.



School Supplies

Gather all necessary school supplies in advance, such as notebooks, pencils, and a backpack, so your child feels prepared and confident.



Setting Goals for the Year

Set realistic and achievable goals, such as reading one book a month, to keep your child motivated and foster a love for learning.



Preparing Healthy Lunch Box Recipes

Prepare balanced meals and healthy snacks to ensure your child gets the nutrition they need throughout the school day.

Establishing a Back-to-School Routine

1. Balanced Meals:

Incorporate a variety of foods from all food groups: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy.

Opt for whole and minimally processed foods.

Ensure your child drinks enough water to stay hydrated, particularly in summer.

- Hydration helps maintain body temperature
- Improves circulation
- Aids digestion
- Boosts the immune system

2. Snack Ideas:

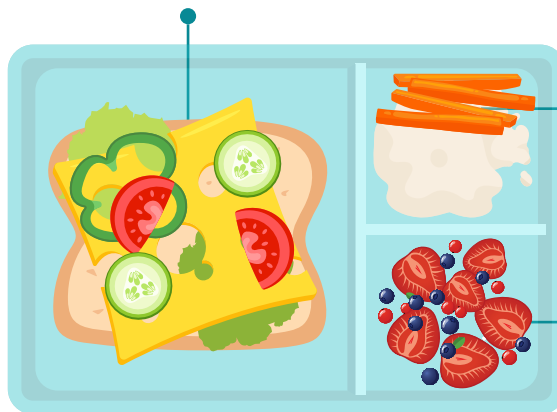
- Prepare healthy snacks such as chopped fruit, vegetable sticks with hummus, yoghurt with granola.
- Avoid sugary snacks and choose natural sources of sweetness, like fresh fruit.

Healthy Lunch Box Recipe

Cheese and Veggie Sandwich

Use whole grain bread with cheddar cheese, cucumber, bell peppers, and spinach.

Bottle of water for the school day.



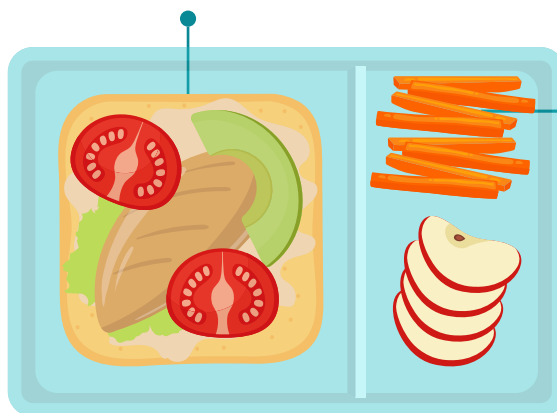
Small container of hummus with celery sticks.

Add mixed berries

Chicken and Avocado Wrap

Spread hummus on a whole-wheat tortilla, then add grilled chicken slices, avocado, shredded lettuce, and tomatoes. Roll up and cut into pieces.

Bottle of water for the school day.



Serve with carrot sticks, and include apple and banana slices.

Importance of Physical and Mental Health

Ensuring your child's medical readiness for school is a key aspect of back-to-school preparation by:

- Keeping vaccination records up-to-date.
- Scheduling annual health check-ups.
- Informing the school of any medical conditions (e.g., asthma, allergies, type 1 diabetes) or required medications.

This approach helps prevent illnesses and ensures a healthy school year.

1. Vaccination Card:

- Verify that the vaccination card is current with all required immunisations.
- Schedule any appointments needed to complete missing vaccinations.

2. Check-Up:

- Arrange an annual health check-up before school begins to confirm your child's good health.
- Discuss any concerns with your healthcare provider and obtain any necessary medical documentation.

Importance of Physical and Mental Health

3. Informing the School:

- Inform the school of any medical conditions, allergies, and required medications.
- Provide clear instructions and any necessary paperwork to the school nurse or administration.

Common health concerns in school



Asthma

is a common chronic condition in children, causing wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness.

If your child has asthma, you should:

- Ensure that they have an updated asthma action plan
- Provide the school with necessary medications
- Inform school staff about managing symptoms.
- Regular check-ups and avoiding known triggers are also essential for effective management.

Common health concerns in school



Allergies: Symptoms, Triggers, and EpiPen Use

Allergies can cause sneezing, itching, a runny nose, watery eyes, and skin rashes.

Severe reactions might include:

- Breathing difficulties.
- Swelling.

Common triggers include:

- Pollen
- Dust mites
- Pet dander
- Certain foods (such as peanuts, tree nuts, and shellfish),
- Insect stings
- Medications

Make sure to inform the school if your child has severe allergies that might require further treatment.

Common health concerns in school



Type 1 diabetes

Type 1 diabetes requires careful management at school.

- Ensure the school is informed about the condition.
- Provide necessary supplies (insulin, glucose tablets, blood glucose meter).
- Create an emergency action plan.
- Have your child wear a medical ID bracelet or pendant indicating they have diabetes.
- Regularly communicate with school staff to ensure they understand your child's needs.



Head lice

Head lice are common in school children. Regularly check for lice and nits.

- Use medicated shampoos if needed.
- Wash bedding and clothing in hot water.
- Inform the school.
- Teach your child not to share hats or hair accessories to prevent spreading.

Common health concerns in school



Heat Exhaustion

Extreme heat and humidity can be uncomfortable and pose a risk to children. Signs of heat exhaustion include:

- Dizziness.
- Thirst.
- Heavy sweating
- Nausea and weakness.

It is important to make sure your child wears light loose clothing and drink enough water to stay hydrated.

Fostering a Positive Mindset

Promoting open communication can foster a positive mindset, allowing a child to express emotional concerns freely. This is crucial for supporting their overall well-being. By creating a safe environment for communication and educating your child about mental health, you can help them manage school-related stress and anxiety more effectively.

Fostering Open Dialogue:

- Create a safe space where your child feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.
- Regularly check in with your children about their school experiences and any concerns they might have.

Mental Health Awareness:

Educate your child about the importance of mental health and how to recognise signs of stress or anxiety.

Signs of stress and anxiety in children include:

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Irritability
- Mood swings
- Frequent stomach aches or headaches
- A decline in school performance

Recognising these signs early allows you to provide the necessary support and intervention.

Seek professional help if your child shows signs of mental health concerns or expresses feelings of overwhelming stress.

Fostering a Positive Mindset

Teaching Children About Bullying:

Bullying is aggressive behaviour that involves unwanted, negative actions and a power imbalance. It can be:

- Physical (hitting)
- Verbal (name-calling)
- Social (excluding someone)

Teach your child to be kind and understanding towards others to help prevent bullying.

Ensure your child feels safe talking to you about their experiences, so you can address any issues together.

How to Deal with Bullying:

- Teach your child to stay calm and walk away if they encounter a bully.
- Encourage them to report any bullying incidents to a teacher or trusted adult.
- Help them build and maintain supportive friendships, so they have a strong network of friends who can look out for each other.

School Bag Characteristics

Selecting the right backpack is crucial for your child's comfort and health during the school year. A comfortable design, proper weight distribution, and multiple compartments can help prevent strain and keep items organised, ensuring your child is prepared and comfortable every day.

How to Choose the Right School Bag for Your Child:

- **Bag Size:** Proportional to the child's body size.
- **Weight Distribution:** Multiple compartments for even weight distribution.
- **Backpack Style:** Two wide, padded shoulder straps.
- **Adjustable and Padded Straps:** Ensure comfort and proper fit.
- **Waist and Chest Straps:** Consider for added stability.
- **Rolling Bags:** Optional for heavy loads.
- **Lighten the Load:** Encourage packing only necessary items.
- **Individual Considerations:** Age, physical abilities, and health conditions.