



Five tips to help your child head back to school

It's back-to-school time! This often brings new teachers, different classmates, or tweaks to daily routines. For some children, this may bring big changes — like starting school for the first time or moving from elementary to junior high school.

A new school year can bring a mix of emotions. Some kids might feel excited to see their friends, while others might be uncertain or worried.

Understanding how your child feels about heading back to school can help you support them and get them settled into a healthy routine. Here are some simple ways you can help your child this fall:

1. Sweet dreams

Set a consistent bedtime and wake-up time and stick to it! Aim to stay as close to it as possible, even on weekends. The amount of sleep your child gets can affect their mood, behaviour, ability to process information and school performance.

2. Put mealtimes on your daily roster

Plan regularly scheduled, healthy [meals](#) and [snacks](#) to keep you and your child fueled for the day. Let them help create a lunch menu for the first week of school, including some of their favourite snacks.

3. Plan ahead

Kids do well with routine. Planning ahead can prevent little worries from growing. Talk with them about how they're feeling. Come up with ideas together about what would help them feel more ready for the school year. For example:

- If your child is feeling anxious about going to a new school, ask for a tour of the school before-hand; let them know it's okay to feel nervous.
- Figure out their route to school and practice it. If they're taking the bus, show them where the bus will pick them up, drop them off and what to do when they get off the bus.
- Review school planners, supply lists and information from your school website. Shop for school supplies together before the first day of school.

4. Check in on their health

Schedule routine check-ups like dental, vision, hearing and time with your family doctor.

5. Talk openly

As the school year begins, take time to check in with your child. Use open-ended questions while doing things together — like walking the dog, making dinner or shooting hoops. Try conversation-starters like:

- *Tell me about...your favourite part of your day at school.*
- *What did you notice...about recess today?*
- *What do you think about...riding the bus?*
- *What do you like most about...after school time?*
- *How are you feeling about...the new activity you tried?*

You may find that your child just doesn't have much to say. Give them time and space to settle in. Offer warmth, care and compassion — your child will learn that they can turn to you when they need help.

Transitions take time. It might be tough for your child or family to jump back into the school routine. Try to be realistic and flexible. If you're concerned that something is wrong, talk to your family healthcare provider or call 811 to speak with a Registered Nurse.

For more information, go to:

- [Sleep: Helping your children—and yourself—sleep well](#)
- [Helping your child move from elementary school to junior high](#)
- [Stress management: Helping your child with stress](#)