

# The New Back-to-School Rules



Follow these expert-approved steps for an A+ transition to fall.

Will your child's first week of classes be calm or hectic? It depends on how you prepare in the month beforehand. Sheryl Ziegler, Psy.D., author of *Mommy Burnout*, and Fulvia Milite, M.D., director of the White Plains Hospital Sleep Center, share their top tips that will make going back to school a breeze.

## 4 Weeks Before School Starts

- Make sure your child gets plenty of exercise. Make bedtime no later than 10pm, and set a no-eating rule for 2-3 hours beforehand. Stick to a set wake-up time.
- Check that your child's immunizations are up to date, his medical forms are filed with school, and he's lice-free.
- Start shopping for school supplies and clothes.
- Do an untimed dry run of a school morning.
- Create a countdown calendar and mark off the days until school starts.

## 3 Weeks Before School Starts

- Begin pushing up bedtime by 15 minutes per night eventually reaching the time you'll want your child to turn in on school nights. Kids ages 3-5 should get 10-13 hours of sleep; kids ages 6-12 should get 9-12 hours; and teens need 8-10 hours.
- Finish your summer bucket list.
- Toss any unusable backpacks and school supplies from last year.

- Set up a designated area in your home where your child can do his homework.
- Install hooks where your child can hang knapsacks, coats, and other items.

## 2 Weeks Before School Starts

- Continue pushing bedtime up by 15 minutes each night until the desired bedtime is achieved, or else push up your child's bedtime cold turkey.
- Establish a bedtime routine with no TV or electronics for an hour beforehand.
- Have get-togethers with new classmates and old friends.
- Host a school supply swap.
- Arrange carpools.

## 1 Week Before School Starts

- Do a timed dry run of a school morning.
- Begin planning school lunches.
- Attend meet-the-teacher events if there are any.

- If your child is starting school, find out the teacher's policy on kids who are having a hard time separating.

## The Night Before

- Allow 2 hours for kids to wind down before bedtime.
- Make sure backpacks are packed and by the door.
- Choose and set out school outfits.



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