

Smooth Transition from Summer to School

Many children, especially in the lower grades, find it hard to make the switch from the lazy days of summer (going to the beach, playing soccer, visiting amusement parks) to the school year (early mornings, routines, homework). Come to think of it, it's not easy for parents, either. But there are ways to smooth the transition:

1. **Read, read, read:** Make reading an integral part of your summer. Libraries often have incentive programs for the summer months; take advantage of them. Read to your child, have them read to you, and read together. Read menus, books, comics, read everything and anything.
2. **Buy supplies:** If you have your child's class list of supplies, keep an eye out for bargains and stock up. Some schools get parents to pay a flat rate and the teachers buy the supplies in bulk and to their own specifications. It's a great time-saver for parents, and the teachers know each child will have the exact supplies he or she needs.
3. **Take inventory:** Go through your child's closet and donate clothes that no longer fit. Throw out any that are beyond repair. Make a list of what items are needed (indoor sneakers, outdoor sneakers, backpack, etc.) and go shopping. Don't forget second-hand stores.
4. **Call the school:** A day or two before school starts, call the school and find out what class your child is in and if there's anything you or your child needs to know before Day 1.
5. **Know the route:** How is your child getting to school: walking, by bus, by car, from the sitter's? Is there a change from last year? Try out the route with your child to see how long it takes. A route that takes you five minutes to walk, for instance, could take a child up to 10 minutes.
6. **Ease back into routine:** A few weeks before the first day, start regulating bedtimes and rising times to be closer to the school-year routine. How long does it take everyone to get ready in the morning?

7. **Build excitement:** Most children are excited about the return to school, at least for a week or two after it starts. Even if you're dreading the return to hectic mornings and evenings supervising homework, control your negativity, which can be contagious. Plan some fun outings during the first few weekends, and sign your child up for some favorite extra-curricular activities.
8. **Visit the school:** A nice tradition is going with your child on the first day back, not just for Grade Primary. It will ease some jitters and make your child feel valued.

Helping your child transition from summer mode to school mode will make them feel prepared to take on the school year and give them a smooth start. A smooth start can give a child the confidence boost he needs to do well all year.

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