

Getting Your Kids Emotionally and Mentally Ready to Go Back to School:

The beginning of school is an exciting time but can also be filled with stress and anxiety for children as well as adults. This can make the event a challenging one for the entire family. The good news is there are plenty of steps you can take to prepare for the big day and ease into the transition.

- Back-to-school means shopping for school supplies and new clothes. Planning before you go will help make it as easy and as budget-friendly as possible. Most kids get excited about heading back to school when they begin shopping for all the new supplies they will be taking.
- The lazy days of summer are relaxing, but they can make it hard to jump back into the school year routine. Make the transition easier by slowly moving back the bedtime and waking them up earlier each morning.
- Create good habits that will make busy school mornings go more smoothly. Teach children to lay out clothes the night before. Pack lunches and water bottles in the fridge the night before for an easy handoff.
- Organize a study space for homework so the time can be as productive and efficient as possible. Make sure there is proper lighting and a comfortable chair with little distractions.
- Re-train the brain by encouraging reading, participating in board games, card games, and jigsaw puzzles prior to the start of school.
- Keep it positive by talking about things the child likes about school, whether it is eating in the lunchroom, gym, being with friends, or meeting a new teacher. Let your child know the importance of education, talk about how you use concepts learned in school for everyday things, such as reading recipes or using history to understand what is happening in the news.
- If your child is entering kindergarten, middle school, or high school for the first time, see if you can visit the school prior to the first day so the child can become familiar with the building.
- Have a backup an emergency plan for before and after school care; make sure your child knows who can get them to school and who can pick them up if you are not available. Create a family “secret word” that all alternate people must know before your child can go with them.

- Make it a fun and exciting process but be sure to look for signs of anxiety and stress and address those in a calm, reassuring manner.

Monthly Messages are brought to you by the Tompkins County Youth Services Department, a proud partner of The Community Coalition for Healthy Youth.

If you have further questions or comments about this message or would like information on how to become involved with the Community Coalition for Healthy Youth, please email kshanks@tompkins-co.org.

