

## Starting The School Year Off Well

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**As the lazy days of summer come to a close, Back to School time is fast approaching. Make sure you and your children are ready for the upcoming school year. Here are some helpful tips to start the school year off well.**

### **Does your child need a yearly check up?**

It's not too late to get a yearly check up on the books. We recommend a yearly check up for children ages 3 to 18. This is also important so school forms, sports forms, and work permits can be filled out and signed. Also, remember if your child needs an Epipen, asthma medication, or other routine medication, now is the time to make sure you have the refills you need and the proper forms to go with them if your child needs the medication(s) at school.

### **Staying involved with extra-curricular activities:**

Being involved and staying involved in healthy extra curricular activities such as sports, dance, music, academic clubs, or charitable organizations can not only keep your child out of trouble, but help them feel connected to others and gives a boost to the self esteem. These activities can give your child something to look forward to and feel good about. Be ware of over scheduling your child. You want them involved, but not stressed out.

### **Bedtime Routines:**

One or two weeks before the school year resumes is a good time to start the bed time routine your child will be keeping during the school year. Having a solid routine can make a huge difference when your child knows what to expect.

### **Calming those first day jitters:**

- Remind your child that he or she is not the only student who is a bit uneasy about the first day of school. Teachers know that students are anxious and will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible.
- Point out the positive aspects of starting school: It will be fun. He/She will see old friends and meet new ones. Refresh his/her positive memories about previous years, when he/she may have returned home after the first day with high spirits because he/she had a good time.
- Find another child in the neighborhood with whom your youngster can walk to school or ride with on the bus.
- If you feel it is appropriate, drive your child (or walk with him/her) to school and pick him/her up on the first day.

### **It's all about the back pack:**

- Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- Pack light. Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of your child's body weight.
- Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.

## **BULLYING**

The definition of bullying per the Academy of American Pediatrics is:

*"Bullying is when one child picks on another child repeatedly. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It can happen at school, on the playground, on the school bus, in the neighborhood, or over the Internet."*

### **When Your Child Is Bullied**

- Help your child learn how to respond to a bully by adopting some of these principles:
  1. Look the bully in the eye. If you show that you are not afraid to look the person in the eye, they may be less apt to target you.
  2. Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation. Falling apart at the first sign of confrontation will probably not help.
  3. Walk away. Sometimes it is best just to remove yourself from the situation.
- Teach your child how to say in a firm voice:
  1. "I don't like what you are doing."
  2. "Please do NOT talk to me like that."
  3. "Why would you say that?"
- Teach your child when and how to ask for help.
- Encourage your child to make friends with other children.
- Support activities that interest your child.
- Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
- Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety and well-being when you cannot be there.

### **When Your Child Is the Bully**

- Be sure your child knows that bullying is never OK.
- Set firm and consistent limits on your child's aggressive behavior.
- Be a positive role model. Show children they can get what they want without teasing, threatening or hurting someone. Remind your child how he or she would like to be treated and how hurtful it would be if someone were not nice to them.
- Use effective, non-physical discipline, such as loss of privileges.
- Develop practical solutions with the school principal, teachers, counselors, and parents of the children your child has bullied.

### **When Your Child Is a Bystander**

- Tell your child not to cheer on or even quietly watch bullying. The encouragement may make the situation worse.

- Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying. It's always best to tell, even if the bully has threatened against it.
- Help your child support other children who may be bullied. Encourage your child to include these children in activities.
- Encourage your child to join with others in telling bullies to stop. There is power in numbers.

### **What's For Lunch?**

- Most schools regularly send schedules of cafeteria menus home. With this advance information, you can plan on packing lunch on the days when the main course is one your child prefers not to eat.
- Each 12-ounce soft drink contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Drinking just one can of soda a day increases a child's risk of obesity by 60%. Restrict your child's soft drink consumption. Water is essential for proper hydration.
- Swapping out sugar filled, high calorie snacks and foods for more natural, low calorie/low sugar foods can make a huge difference in your child's school performance.
- Hungry children can not learn, and choosing foods with fiber and protein can help your kiddo stay focused through out the day.

**Of course if you have questions regarding scheduling a check up, filling out school forms, or getting ready for the start of a new school year, please call the office.**