
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES



Back-to-School Checklist



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

The end of summer and the start of a new school year can bring mixed emotions. Students may feel sad about the end of their vacation, nervous about going back to school or excited to see their friends. Parents may feel overwhelmed with the stress of getting ready and perhaps a bit relieved or sad that it's ending.

The whole process doesn't have to be a source of dread for anyone. There are a number of easy-to-use checklists on the Web to help you count down the days until school starts.

Back-to-School Checklist

SchoolFamily.com has an excellent printable checklist that should cover most of the bases for back-to-school preparation.

Download a copy at <http://www.schoolfamily.com/print-and-use-tools/document/584-back-to-school-checklist>.

The topics include:

- School logistics and requirements
- Medical requirements
- School supplies
- Learning about your school
- Planning for parent involvement
- Planning healthy meals
- Transportation
- Childcare and after-school planning
- Helping your child prepare

Another good resource for parents provides a countdown checklist with suggestions for getting ready. It starts two months before school starts with tips for six weeks, one month, three weeks, two weeks, one week, five days, three days and the day before the school doors open.

Check out this calendar checklist at <http://www.momagenda.com/printable/back-to-school.pdf>.

Most of the items on your school preparation list are not difficult. They require some legwork – trips to the store or time on the phone. The last one on the list – helping your child prepare – may be the trickiest but the most important.

The end of the lazy days of summer

The best way to help students who find transitions from summer to a school schedule difficult, is to start the school schedule before the start of school.

Transition from a lax summer sleep schedule by moving bedtime gradually back to the school-year bedtime. Gradually set the morning

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alarm closer to your school wake up time. If students start this transition a few weeks prior to the first day of school, they won't be as groggy when they have to get up and be ready to learn.

Classroom anxiety

If your child is nervous about going back to school, try to visit the school and, if possible, the classroom, before the first day. If your school announces classroom placements before school starts, you may even be able to visit your child's teacher. Call your school to see if they have accommodations for anxious students. And while your child may not be placed in a classroom with his or her closest friends, there are usually plenty of opportunities to socialize during recess and lunch. Schedule summer play dates kids from school to help build and maintain those school friendship connections.

Don't forget back-to-school safety

The National Safety Council has compiled a safety checklist to help families ensure student safety traveling to and from school.

It provides safety guidance on:

- Walking to school
- Riding a bicycle to school
- Riding the bus to school
- Preventing backpack-related injuries
- Preventing playground-related injuries

See the checklist: http://www.nsc.org/safety_home/SafetyObservances/Documents/Back%20to%20School/Back%20to%20School%20Safety%20Checklist.pdf

Back-to-school tips for your teen

Teens have been through the back-to-school routine enough by now to know it requires more planning than just getting school supplies together. About.com offers a checklist of helpful reminders for teenagers that will help them get socially and mentally prepared. These include:

1. Eat breakfast before school.
2. Choose clothes for comfort and confidence.
3. Share what you did on summer break.
4. Get a new haircut.
5. Know your locker combination.
6. Carry gum or mints for fresh breath.
7. Bring fruit for healthy snack time.
8. Decorate your locker to personalize your space.
9. Bring deodorant – just in case.
10. Start the new school year with an open mind to new friendships.
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(<http://teenadvice.about.com/od/schoolscolleges/a/A-Back-To-School-Checklist-For-Teens-Only.htm>)