News Column for Use Week of August 7, 2023
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Back-to-School Parenting

If your family is anything like mine, you probably get a little off-schedule during the summer months. Lots of activities with a later sunset means later bedtimes and sleeping in. But August is here, which means school is about to start. Schedules, routines, and organization can help reduce the stress of returning to school.

Establish a bedtime routine with a set time for your children to be in bed. It can be helpful to write the routine down. For younger children, you can use pictures or a chart to help them learn the routine, such as changing clothes, brushing teeth, etc. Routines can help children learn responsibility and build self-esteem in their ability to do tasks independently. Establish a morning routine as well. Getting out the door for school and work can be hectic. Consider using an alarm clock and having children wake themselves. Again, have a written or picture routine list for getting ready for the day.

To help with those routines, organize so everything has a place. Maybe it’s a basket, cubby, or a hook in your house so your child knows where their school items, such as a backpack, lunch box, and shoes, go every day after school. This will help with the morning routine, so no one must take time to find needed items.

Most of the time, school also means homework so have a set location and time. Check in daily with your children to see what needs to be done. Make sure to have the supplies needed to complete any work sent home from school.

In addition to these tips, talk with your children. Share the routines and schedules but also take the time to seek input from them. Be present, turn off electronics, and ask your children about their day. Make time for conversations.

A little preparation and communication can be helpful in the weeks to come as families transition back to school. Enjoy these moments with your children as parents all know; the days sometimes pass slowly, but the years go fast.

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