

# Momentum

Back to school prep



Employee Assistance Program

**1-800-327-1393**

For TTY Users: 1-800-456-4006

## Fun back-to-school traditions

- ☑ Have a home fashion show where children can model their new school outfits.
- ☑ Prepare a special breakfast on the first day of school such as pancakes in the shape of their new grade level, doughnuts, French toast, etc.
- ☑ Take plenty of pictures as they head to school the first day.
- ☑ Offer to do something fun with them after the first school day: ride bikes, walk the dog or visit their favorite treat eatery

## Get a fresh start to a new school year

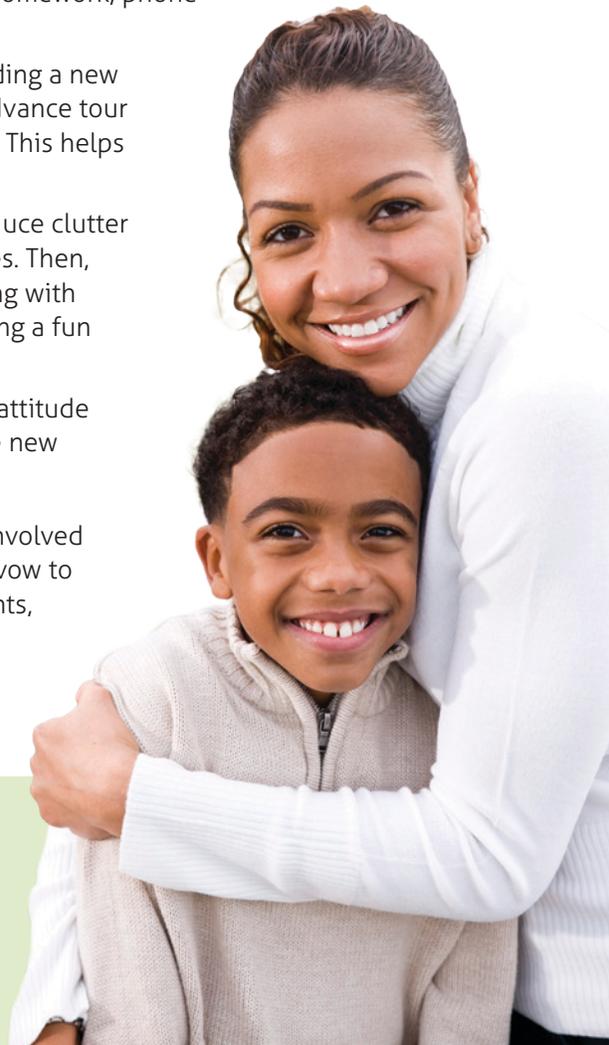
As the summer of 2016 wanes, people with school-age children realize it's time to start thinking about a new school year. Why not take a little extra time this year to put some pep into your back-to-school prep?

Transitions are tough. The back-to-school push is a big change, particularly if children are attending school for the first time or switching schools. It helps to review with kids your expectations for the morning and evening routines, homework, phone and TV limits, and more.

- If a young child will be attending a new school this year, call for an advance tour of the school with him or her. This helps de-mystify the environment.
- Examine kids' closets and reduce clutter by removing outgrown clothes. Then, make back-to-school shopping with the kids enjoyable by including a fun restaurant meal.
- Strive to maintain an upbeat attitude as the family prepares for the new school year.

If you haven't previously been involved in your child's school activities, vow to do so this year. Meet other parents, volunteer to help in class, and ask your child about his or her school day—every day.

Remember that for many families, the back-to-school experience can be a struggle for both children and parents. Children usually do better when parents convey their trust in the school and teachers.



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# The importance of a schedule

If summer vacation has largely been an unscheduled wilderness, your children may currently resemble sloths more than scholars. Here are tips on getting kids back into the school groove.

- To help kids be more energetic and ready to learn, begin the school-type schedule at least a week before school starts.
- Particularly with younger children, it helps to practice in advance going to bed, waking up, getting dressed and having a good breakfast.
- As the summer comes to a close, you might start moving the bedtimes and wakeup times earlier in 15-minute increments (for example, to 9:00 from 9:15 at night).
- Even teens who have been sleeping past noon all summer can benefit from a gradual shift to an earlier wakeup time.
- As school approaches, reduce the amount of time children are allowed to spend with electronic screens.
- Reduce your every-morning stress by getting into the habit of picking out clothes for the next day and readying backpacks prior to bedtime.

## Reduce anxiety for you and your child



### Share positive stories

If a child expresses hesitancy about the upcoming year, he or she may get reassurance from one of the many age-appropriate books showing children overcoming their fears. Also, describe for your child how you once felt scared when starting something new. Explain how most children have these feelings, yet everything turns out fine.



### Inspire confidence

Acknowledge your child's anxious feelings but express confidence that they can handle the challenges. When talking about the coming school year, offer positive descriptions of the new, interesting and fun things they can expect. And, even though you may be feeling the back-to-school jitters all over again, strive to be calm and positive.



### Promote resilience

When saying goodbye to a young child each day, use a fun phrase or gesture you can share. Repeated use of the familiar phrase can comfort the child and smooth the morning farewell. On the health front, make sure your child gets regular after-school exercise plus adequate sleep at night.



**Webinar**—On August 10, 2016, join us for a lively, informative webinar: *Back to School Survival for Parents*. Register [here](#).