



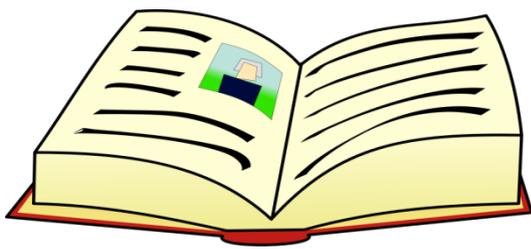
Back to School Tips for Parents.

Starting the new school year can be a time of great excitement... and anxiety. Help calm your child's fears (and your own) with these teacher-approved tips.

Meet the new teacher.

For kids, one of the biggest back-to-school fears is "Will I like my new teacher?" Breaking the ice early on is one of the best ways to calm everyone's fears. Take advantage of your school's open house or back-to-school night. Some teachers welcome phone calls or e-mails — another great opportunity to get to know each other before the year begins.

If personal contact with the teacher isn't possible, try locating the teacher's picture on a school website or in a yearbook, so your child can put a name with a face. If your child's teacher sends a welcome letter, be sure to read the letter together.



Tour the school.

If your school hosts an open house, be sure to go. Familiarizing your child with their environment will help them avoid a nervous stomach on the first day. Together you can meet their teacher, find their desk, or explore the playground.

With an older child, you might ask them to give you a tour of the school. This will help refresh his memory and yours.

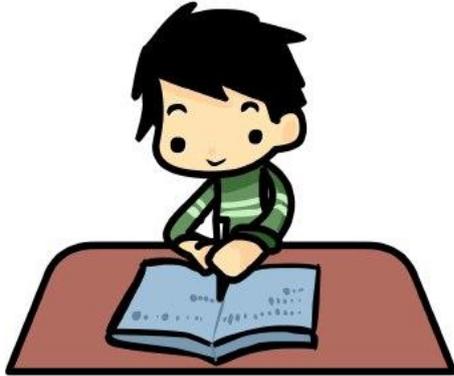
Connect with friends.

A familiar friend can make all the difference when heading back to school. You might try calling parents from last year's class and finding out which children are in your child's class

this year. Refresh these relationships before school starts by scheduling a play date or a school carpool.

Tool up.

Obtain the class supply list and take a special shopping trip with your child. Having the right tools will help them feel prepared. While keeping basic needs in mind, allow for a couple of splurges like a cool notebook or a favourite coloured pen. These simple pleasures make going back to school a lot more fun.



School supply lists also provide great insight into the schoolwork ahead. Get your child excited about upcoming projects by explaining how new supplies might be used. Let them practice using supplies that they have not used before — such as colouring pencils or a protractor — so they will be comfortable using them in class.

Ease into the routine.

Switching from a summer to a school schedule can be stressful to everyone in the household. Avoid first-day-of-school mayhem by practicing your routine a few days in advance. Set the alarm clock, go through your morning rituals, and get in the car or to the bus stop on time. Routines help children feel comfortable, and establishing a solid school routine will make the first day of school go much smoother.

