

# Beat the Back-to-School Blues

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The smell of freshly sharpened pencils, the sound of bells ringing through the halls, and the gathering of friends that you haven't seen all summer.

I am sure we can all think back to our childhood and remember how the beginning of a new school year brought on excitement, dread, or anxiety.

As a parent, you can help your children get a good start to this school year and ease some of those anxious thoughts and feelings.



For many kids, one of the biggest back-to-school worries is if they will like their teacher. Breaking the ice early is one of the best ways to calm their fears. If personal contact with the teacher is not possible before school starts, try locating the teacher's picture on a school website or in a yearbook. Helping your child put a face with a name before the first day in the classroom can help them feel more at ease and prepare them for their first interaction.

Familiarizing your child with their environment is another thing you can do to help them avoid nervous tummy aches. If your school offers a walk-through before the first day, this can be a great opportunity for you to meet the teacher, find their desk, or explore the school together. With older children, try asking them to give you a tour of the school and their classroom. Not only will this help refresh their minds, but it will give you an idea of where they will be spending the majority of their time over the next several months.

Go over class supply lists and plan a shopping trip. Having all the needed school supplies can help your child feel prepared. By taking your kids back to school shopping, they will feel supported and encouraged. Allow for a couple of splurges like a cool notebook or a backpack in their favorite color while also keeping basic needs in mind. Even a small fun purchase can make going back to school more enjoyable and give them something to look forward to.

Ease into new routines the week leading up to the first day of school. Switching from a summer schedule to a structured school schedule can be stressful for everyone in a household. Avoid mayhem on the first day of school by getting into the new routine a few days in advance. Set an alarm clock, go through your morning ritual, and make time for a healthy breakfast. Routines help children feel comfortable, and establishing one early will make the first day of school go so much smoother.

After school kicks off, take time to talk as a family about how each day went. Try asking how they like their classes, if they have made any new friends, or what they like most about school thus far. Not only will you learn more about how they are adapting to all the changes, but this will also help strengthen family relationships by bonding over shared conversations.

Don't let the beginning of a new school year create unnecessary stress for your kids and household. By doing some of these simple things, you can help your children feel prepared and ready to tackle another great school year. For more information, contact Cassidy Lutz at [celutz@ksu.edu](mailto:celutz@ksu.edu) or by calling 620-625-8620.