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Parental Wisdom – Emails

The Promise of a New School Year

Each new school brings brand new sneakers, book bags and promise. Children start the school year with an A+; they have to keep it. Parents can help in a number of ways.

1. Plan ahead to reduce family stress
Whether it is the weekly meal menu, healthy lunch boxes, or having the school wardrobe ready, it's always better to plan ahead. Include your children in the planning whenever possible. Rushing through the start of a day can easily spiral out of control.
2. Everything in its place
Keys, school papers, book bags, sports equipment, and musical instruments should all have a specific place in the house. Though parents can create the organization, kids need to maintain it.
3. Set your children up for success
Studies continually show that children that eat a good breakfast with lots of protein can concentrate better in school. Get them up a little earlier to start the day right.
4. Provide a study spot
 - a. Have school supplies in a place that is quiet and free from distractions.
 - b. Teach them about budgeting their time so projects are ready, not rushed.
 - c. Review (not do) their homework so you know what is going on at school.
 - d. Make sure you dig deep into book bags so you can read all school notes.
5. Don't wait for a red flag or a bad report card before recognizing a struggling student. Contact the teacher before your child gets too far behind.
6. Encourage safety
 - a. If your child walks to school, make sure he knows how to obey traffic rules.
 - b. If she rides a bike, be sure she wears a helmet.
 - c. If he rides the bus, make sure the school district has installed seat belts.
 - d. Children can only learn if they feel safe. If your child is being bullied, discuss the situation with school officials and insist school programs that

teach tolerance and inclusion such as [Operation Respect](#). They offer free programs to schools.

7. Don't let over-scheduling take away your precious family time. Limit the number of activities you allow your child to participate in.
8. Have dinner together every night. Use this a way for your family to stay connected and to let your children know they belong. Read more about [Family Day](#), which is September 22nd Pay attention to which subjects and teachers your child talks about. Often those are the teachers that have the most profound impact on your child. Write the teacher a note to let them know their influence.
9. Create an environment for lifelong learning, and teach your children that lessons can easily extend beyond the classroom. Extracurricular and family activities are good ways to help your child learn new things and gain confidence in his or her abilities.
10. Stay involved in your child's school and participate especially when opportunities arise to meet your child's classmates such as book fairs or school trips.
11. Keep in touch with your children's teachers and let them know of any situation that may affect your child in school such as a family illness, recent move, job loss or divorce.
12. When your children challenge your family rules, as compared to their friends' houses, such as no TV during the week, explain clearly but firmly that things are done differently in your house.
13. Routines are important to children as it helps them feel secure. Consistency is key when it come to bath time, reading and bedtime.
14. Remember you are preparing our next workforce generation. Be sure to instill the importance of showing up and not let your children stay home from school unless it's absolutely necessary. In the same respect, make sure they understand that being on time is equally important.
15. Make learning real. Show how school skills are needed for such day-to-day activities as cooking from a recipe, balancing a checkbook and writing thank-you notes.

If you would like to add a comment on other ideas that might work, please visit [Parental Wisdom's blog](#).