A Good Night's Sleep Prepares Kids For School

It's back to school time and as usual, parents will be helping their kids prepare by shopping for new clothes and school supplies. But there are other preparations that are much more important. By improving our children's sleep hygiene and by teaching them to relax themselves to sleep, we increase their chances of being happy, healthy, and successful students.

Sleep affects our children's mood, health, and ability to learn. When Tel Aviv University administered tests to fourth and sixth graders, they found that by adding just one hour of sleep, children's attention span and memory improved dramatically, often by several grade levels. A good night's sleep benefits logical reasoning skills and helps children to organize their brains, process information, and remain alert in class the next day. While a child sleeps, his or her brain is processing new information. When a child is taught something new, but then doesn't sleep long enough or deeply enough for the information to move from temporary to long-term memory, it can be lost forever.

Children who are sleep deprived are frequently inattentive and spacey, have trouble concentrating, and run the risk of being mislabeled as ADHD. A Brown University study suggests "sleep deprivation in normal children can lead to symptoms of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)." Researchers found that several days of sleep deprivation resulted in the development of ADHD symptoms, and that children's hyperactivity levels escalated with each additional night of poor sleep. Other studies report that even when children have been diagnosed correctly, their ADHD symptoms are likely to improve when they get more sleep.

Children's sleep problems are often compounded when school starts because they have gotten used to staying up late and sleeping in during the long summer break. If this problem isn't corrected before school starts, children are likely to struggle as they adjust to an earlier schedule. The following tips will help reset children's internal clock before school begins - so they can get off to a good start.

Before school starts:

* Move bedtime up by 15 - 30 minutes one week before school starts.
* Consistently wake kids up earlier during the week before school starts.
* Motivate children to get out of bed by creating fun reasons for them to get going. For example, plan an early morning treasure hunt, a picnic breakfast at the park or a back to school breakfast with friends.
* Be sure your child spends time outside in the morning; early morning sunshine helps to reset the internal clock.

During the school year:

* Have a set bedtime. Children should consistently go to bed at the same time every night. Even on the weekends, it should not vary by more than one hour a night or a total of two hours for the entire weekend. If it does, you're setting your child up for a kind of jet lag when Monday morning rolls around.
* Warn children five to ten minutes before they need to get ready for bed so they can wrap up what they're doing.
* Have quiet activities before bed. (Limit television, video games and computer time.)
* Avoid caffeinated drinks in the late afternoon and evening.
* Have a consistent bedtime routine. Create a consistent bedtime ritual - in a predictable calming environment that serves as a bridge between the excitement of daytime and the restful quiet of nighttime.
* Practice relaxation techniques. During the bedtime routine, take a few minutes to practice self-soothing relaxation techniques such as progressive relaxation, attending to the breath, and visualization.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dubbed "The Dream Maker" by People magazine, Patti Teel is a former teacher and the author of The Floppy Sleep Game Book, which gives parents techniques to help their children relax, deal with stress, or fall asleep. Patti also has a website dedicated to children's visualizations, stories and lullabies for bedtime or quiet time.

Living With Autism and Other Special Needs: Back to School Tips

Most parents look forward to the end of August because it is back to school time. Back to school time for parents with children who have special needs can be a mixed blessing. Transitions and change are difficult for all children, but particularly children with autism.

Here are some tips for parents to help make back to school time more pleasant for you and your child with autism.

1) Begin getting into the school routine early. Make a picture schedule of the morning routine and start following it. Start getting up a little bit earlier each day and going to bed earlier at night. This will make thing easier instead of waiting until the night before school starts and saying, "School is tomorrow. You need to go to bed at 8:00" when your child has been staying up until 10:00.

2) Think twice before purchasing new school clothes. In my experience children with autism do not generally like the feeling of new clothes. To send a child to school with all new scratchy clothes might be a bit of sensory overload. Instead, consider buying used clothes or washing them several times before school starts. Encourage your child to wear his new clothes and shoes at home.

3) Consider getting a haircut early. Some children with autism don't like getting haircuts and if they start to associate haircuts with school it will add to their anxiety.

4) Glasses - If your child wears glasses, and he doesn't wear them during the summer (which I don't recommend), have him wear them at least a week prior to school starting.

5) Read books and watch t.v. shows about going back to school.

6) Make a social story featuring your child and read it to him every day. Social stories are helpful for children with autism because it helps them prepare for things that are going to be different. You can include photos if you wish.

Here is an example:

Summertime is almost over. Kevin is getting ready to go back to school. On August 24th Kevin will ride Bus 456 to "Canyon Elementary School." "Kevin's" teachers this year are Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Jones. Kevin's Dad bought him new shoes for school. Kevin's Mom bought him new clothes for school. Kevin is getting ready to go back to school.

7) Use a calendar to mark down the days until school starts. Put a picture of a school bus on the date of the first day of school.

8) Make plans to meet the teacher ahead of time. For tips on meeting the teacher, read my article Meeting the New Teacher.

For more information on teaching and parenting children with special needs, go to http://www.myspecialneedsclassroom.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kristin Whiting has over 20 years experience in the field of education, including teaching and administrative experience. She is currently doing what she loves best - teaching. She is a Special Needs Preschool Teacher. She loves to write and in addition to her two blogs, she is a regular contributor to Yahoo Contributor Network, Ezinearticles.com, Squidoo and Hubpages.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/6476342

PEATC Workshops and Events: August 2013

Thursday, August 8, 2013-"Understanding Special Education (in Spanish)", Good Shepherd Catholic Church 8710 Mt. Vernon Hwy, Alexandria, Va 22309, 6:30-8:30pm.

Saturday, August 17, 2013-"Surfer's Healing" Event Resource Table, Between 2nd & 5th Steets & Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, 8:30am-4:00pm; Directions & Parking info: http://surfershealingvb.org/

Monday, August 26, 2013-"Organizing Special Education Paperwork" workshop at the Formed Families event. 6pm, 4031 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. To register, contact www.formedfamiliesforward.org
It's August - Let's Go
Back to School

Back to School: Get Ready! Set! Go!

Being a parent means that when the end of July, beginning of August comes around, you are scrambling to get your kiddos ready for school. For the hundreds of millions of kids across the US, school is something to dread or wait excitedly for (depending on how their school year ended), and for mommies and daddies, school means preparations, buying school supplies, picking out school clothes, making scheduling adjustments, and lots and lots of hair pulling. Many parents groan in frustration, but their groans can be silenced by simply following these easy tips on preparing you and your kids for the coming school year.

Bright Beginnings and Elementary School

1. When the end of the summer begins to show its shiny head, its time to prepare your kiddos for their school schedule. What does that mean? Well, a simple trick to help get your kids back onto school time is to make their bedtimes the same as it would be during the school year. This means that they go to bed earlier than they have been all summer, and they don't get to sleep in. Yes, this means that you don't get that bit of morning peace before the rising storm, but if you get them on schedule now, you won't want have deal with such a big hassle later.

2. The all important school supplies list should be compiled, reviewed, and reviewed again. It is crucial that you leave nothing off the list that your child(ren) might need when school begins. Once the school supplies list has been compiled and reviewed vigorously, shopping may begin. Taking one single trip to the store makes everything so much easier. At many discount stores, you can buy all your school supplies, teacher supplies, clothes, and lunch items all in one place. Sounds simple, right?

The Middle of the Line

1. Once again, school supplies play an important part to school preparedness. Just because they are in middle school doesn't mean that they won't need a plethora of markers, crayons, and other crafty things. In some cases, the school will ask that you help provide the classroom with classroom supplies and teacher supplies. Why is this? Well, with the rising cost of everything these days, schools are having a harder time providing everything your child's budding brain needs to succeed. Send your child's school a hand and purchase a few extra packs of paper, tubs of glue, and boxes of markers.

2. Just because they want to appear older doesn't mean that they aren't a little intimidated by the idea of being in a new school. Junior highs are a whole new world for the 5th or 6th grader that enters the hallowed halls of a middle school. Taking your kids on a visit of the school grounds will help them acquaint themselves with the school so that the first day isn't quite so confusing.

3. If your child struggled with a specific subject in elementary school, consider finding a tutor for them. It is important that your child stay on the same academic level as their peers so that they don't fall behind. Falling behind in a subject can be embarrassing, and can cause numerous social and academic problems in the future.

The High Road

1. The SATs and the PSATs are super important tests that absolutely need to be taken once your child enters high school. Do some research and find out when and where the tests are going to take place. Prepare your child for the test by either enrolling them in a pre-testing class or purchasing a study book.

2. Now that your beloved child is in high school, their school schedule and social calendars are going to be more full than ever. Make sure that you keep on top of what your child is doing, not only so you can keep your eye on them, but also so you can see involvement in their lives.

3. High school is the official jumping off point for college. Once your child enters their sophomore year of high school, they should be seriously considering which colleges they would like to attend and what field of study they would like to go into. Preparing for college far in advance helps you plan for their future, and get your super long list of school supplies ready and reviewed.

Getting your child ready for a new year of school shouldn't be a hassle. Knowing what you need by making school supplies lists and knowing what to prepare them for is really going to help make their transition from summer fun to school setting a breeze.

About the Author
Seonul Evans is a SEO Services consultant for leading Discount School Supply retailer (American Classroom Supply).

Backpacks For School: First-day Jitters

Let’s face it; preparing for your child’s first day of school can be stressful on the whole family. For my kids, it doesn’t matter whether they’re starting a new school or going back to the same teachers and friends they knew last year, they are still a little nervous for the big day. One thing that helps ease the tension and anticipation of the first school day is the preparation of the backpack for school. My kids tend to be much more calm and excited about the first day of school if they’re involved in shopping for school supplies, planning lunch time meals and organizing their new school items in a unique school backpack that really suits their personalities – giving them the confidence to go back to school in style.

Unique School Backpacks
My 9-year-old daughter is very “fashion-forward” and probably one of the pickiest fashion critics around! She’s always looking for exceptionally cute school backpacks to show her group of friends. Chams and iron-on patches are really popular with the kids right now, so I make sure to spend some time with my daughter personalizing her backpack. Of course, cute school backpacks with themes like ballet slippers or planetary patterns are still fun at this age, as well.

As for my eldest, a video game fanatic 13-year-old who loves rock music, it’s a little easier finding a backpack he approves of. But most backpacks have become a little mundane for my son, so I try to add something special – like an iron-on of his favorite band – to make a more unique school backpack.

Whatever your child’s personality may be, here are some backpack tips to help make your child’s first day a breeze:

Health comes first. Remember that a backpack shouldn’t weigh more than 10% of your child’s body weight, and the shoulder straps (there should be two) must be padded.

Packing and organizing. Make sure your children know the importance of packing as light as possible and placing items towards the center of the bag so weight is distributed evenly. Keep supply items in appropriate sized, easily accessible compartments and pockets so your child isn’t fumbling around for something during class.

Getting the kids involved. Let the kids help you pick out their school supplies and a healthy lunch are the basics essentials for your child’s first day back to school. However, it’s always nice to include things like:

• Body spray or deodorant to keep them feeling fresh all day and a little less self-conscious (a must for my 13-year-old boy)
• An extra strong bag with handles in case they are loaded with too many text books on the first day of school.
• Emergency numbers and if possible, a cell phone
• A special note of encouragement written by you!

Don’t hold back when it comes to getting your child excited about upcoming classes, the enthusiasm might last throughout the school year. It’s worked for me – now only I could get my kids excited about homework (but that’s probably too much for any parent to accomplish!)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Andrea Netta is a mother of two who, along with her husband, owns a successful catering company in Cincinnati, Ohio. When she’s not working or chasing after her children, she enjoys writing, and yoga.

SOURCE:
http://www.articledashboard.com/Article/Backpacks-for-School-first-day-Jitters/213515

LATINO CORNER

Regresando a la escuela
Infórmate e Involvedate

¡Las clases ya empiezan muy pronto! Esto significa que es hora de prepararse para el año escolar. Una forma de preparar es informándose. Abajo hay una lista de materiales que puede utilizar. También no se olvide de participar en la educación de su hijo(a). Conozca a sus maestros (puede reunirse con ellos antes de que la escuela empiece), pregunte cuál sería la mejor manera de contactarlos y si hay alguna forma en que usted puede ayudar a que su hijo(a) sea exitoso(a) este año escolar. Vaya a las reuniones de la escuela y ayúde en las actividades de la escuela. Llame a PEATC al 703-923-0010 o al 757-572-6579 con sus preguntas sobre educación especial. Hablamos español.

PEATC: www.peatec.org
Revisión del IEP: http://niecy.org/espanol/procesos/revisor
EXITÓ en la escuela: http://www2.ed.gov/espanol/parents/academic/escuela/index.html
Comunicación: http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-e82s.pdf
El poder de los padres: http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/index.html
Los derechos de la familia: http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/index.html
Guía de educación especial: http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/index.html

Back to School
Be Informed and Involved

The beginning of the school year is almost here! It is time to get ready for the school year. A good way to prepare is to be informed. Below is a list of Spanish materials that you can use. Be involved in your child’s education. Know his teachers (you can meet with them before the school year begins), ask them what the best way to contact them is and how you can help your child succeed this school year. Go to school meetings and volunteer in school activities. Contact PEATC at 703-923-0010 or 757-572-6579 with your questions about special education. We have bilingual staff that can assist you.

PEATC: www.peatec.org
Review the IEP: http://niecy.org/espanol/procesos/revisor
How will I Know If My Child is Making Progress? http://www.pacer.org/publications/pdfs/ALL13s.pdf
Success in School: http://www2.ed.gov/espanol/parents/academic/escuela/index.html
Communication: http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-e82s.pdf