



SCHOOL IS BACK!

It's back-to-school season and that brings about a whole new busy schedule. Between taking your kids to and from after-school activities, doing homework, and then making dinner, it becomes easy to lose track of taking care of yourself. The number one thing parents report this time of the year is feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Here are a few tips on how to make the start of the new school year easier and not feel so overwhelmed.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS

- 1. Create a Master Calendar.** Put everyone's schedule on a board and place it where it is easily accessible and where you will see it everyday.
- 2. Plan Extracurricular Activities.** Make sure that your commitments don't overlap and that you sign-up for only what you are prepared to do. Don't over-schedule yourself or your kids, its ok to say no!
- 3. Review Your Transportation Plans.** Decide who will pick up the kids from their activities. Try and set up a carpool with other parents.
- 4. Meal Prep.** Meal prepping not only saves time but also money. Plan out dinners the week before and have the ingredients handy, so you are not scrambling to put something together at the last minute.

SELF-CARE GUIDE

- 1. Start with Your Needs First.** Before you practice any self-care related activity ask your self: what need do I want to meet here? What do I need most in my life right now?
- 2. Schedule It.** Be realistic with your schedule, if you only have 10 minutes in the day, make sure you set that time aside, and use it depending on your needs.
- 3. Prioritize.** We all feel like we do not have enough time in the day to get everything done, but that is probably because our priorities are out of alignment. Everything we do with our time is a choice and the reality is that we actually do have complete control over our time. If you need to make time for self-care, prioritize!
- 4. Be Assertive.** It can be hard to start saying "no," but it is necessary to start placing your needs above others'. Remember: when you take time for yourself, you'll be a much healthier person to deal with the world around you.
- 5. Focus on Little and Often.** Self-care is more effective when you practice it little and often rather than big chunks at a time. An activity that takes 10-15 minutes a day is far more helpful than one that takes 2 hours once a month.



HOW TO KNOW WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ACTUALLY HUNGRY

Is your child a grazer? Is your child always asking for snacks and never actually eating all of their meals because he or she is too full, only to ask for another snack in a few hours? Children who nibble on food all day will never feel hungry and thus lose their hunger cues. If a child is never given the chance to feel hungry, he or she may not learn to associate feeling hungry with eating and nourishing their bodies. We do not always eat when hungry, oftentimes we eat when we are bored, unhappy, stressed, etc. We want our children to be able to connect eating when feeling hungry and know the difference between emotional eating and physical hunger. All of this can help children avoid the consequences of overeating such as weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, etc. Try the following tips to help your child learn about their hunger:

- **Stick to a Schedule.** Try serving snacks and meals about three hours apart. Serve a healthy meal for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and then in between meals offer a snack. If your child does eat their meal at mealtime, then let them know that there will not be anything served again until the next snack time. If your child doesn't have the chance to experience the consequences of feeling hungry, then what is the motivation for them to finish their meal?
- **Listen To Your Child's Hunger Cues.** Children know when they are full, it is natural for their appetite to vary from day-to-day. Up to 85% of parents say that they push their children to eat more when they say they are full; which is actually encouraging them to overeat!

TIPS FOR PACKING A HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

Give your kids healthy food options from each food group and let them make the final decisions on what goes in their lunch.



Take your child grocery shopping with you and let them have a say (to a certain extent) in what goes into the cart. This promotes feelings of responsibility and empowerment.



Designate a part of your kitchen as the "lunch packing station" and spend some time there with your kids the night before to get lunch ready for the next day.



ENCOURAGE HYDRATION

It's recommended that school-aged kids drink between 6-8 cups of water a day (even more in hot weather or if their activity level is high).



Let your child pick out their favorite water bottle and encourage them to drink the whole thing at least twice at school. They'll be more inclined to do it if they feel like they are completing a challenge!



If the "flavor" of water is too boring for them, throw in a few pieces of frozen fruit to sweeten it up and keep it cooler.



INCORPORATE ALL FOOD GROUPS

A balanced diet includes all of the food groups. Use MyPlate as a visual to help you structure what should go into your child's lunch. Luckily, there are so many different ways to enjoy each food group.

FRUIT
Fresh, frozen, dried, canned, baked (think apple chips!) or pureed.



VEGETABLES
Fresh, frozen, or baked (think kale chips!)



LEAN PROTEIN
Baked chicken, deli meats, hard boiled eggs, beans or nuts (make sure you're aware of nut allergy regulations at your child's school).



LOW-FAT DAIRY
Milk, cheese or yogurt.



WHOLE GRAINS
Pita, sandwich bread, tortillas, wraps, and pastas.



MAKE YOUR OWN SNACKS & LIMIT PROCESSED ONES

Kids rely on snacks to keep their energy up, but the type of snack is important to consider. Packaged snacks tend to lack important nutrients and can be high in sugar, sodium and saturated fats. Take control of what is in your kids' snacks by making them yourself!

NO BAKE ENERGY BITES



ANTS ON A LOG



FRUIT LEATHERS



YOGURT COVERED RAISINS

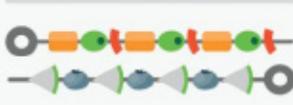


TURN HEALTHY FOODS INTO FUN FOODS

Use cookie cutters to make shapes out of bread, deli meat, cheese, or a melon baller for fruit.



Use kid-friendly skewers to make colorful food kebabs.



Create a lunch theme for the day and have all of the foods in their lunch relate to the theme (i.e. pirate theme, rainbow theme, etc).



GETTING FIT TOGETHER

Parents are the number one source affecting the way children feel about having a healthy lifestyle. When family members engage in physical activity, children learn the importance of creating an exercise habit. Research shows that children with active parents are 5.8 times more likely to be active on a regular basis. Children are always watching their parents' every move, and mirroring their every action. If a parent spends their whole day watching TV, then their child is more likely to do the same. But, parents who exercise and eat healthy with their children on a regular basis, are teaching them how to lead a healthy, active lifestyle.

EASY FAMILY EXERCISES

Turn TV commercials into fitness breaks. Try a different exercise for every commercial and keep moving until the show comes back on.



Go for daily walks. Building walks into your daily schedule ensures that you and your family get regular exercise and provides quality time to spend together outside of the house. Incorporate fun games like: counting how many dogs you see, playing follow the leader or I spy, or even seeing who can spot the most birds.



Have a yoga session before bedtime. Yoga has been proven to help kids calm down, learn stress management, build concentration, and increase their confidence. After a busy day, yoga can help you and your child unwind and relax!



BENEFITS OF FAMILY FITNESS

It provides extra motivation, encouragement, and time to make meaningful memories. Children, as well as adults, are more likely to participate in an activity if they have a friend or family member participating with them.



BEDTIMES RITUALS

Bedtime routines are important for children regardless of age. Establishing and maintaining good sleep habits help children to fall asleep, stay asleep, and wake up ready for the day. An important part of learning to be independent is having the skills to settle yourself down when you are tired or stressed. Bedtime routines help a child learn to transition from their busy days to relax at nights, it also helps to instill a sense of confidence in the child.

Use the following tips to help your child get into the bedtime routine:

- **Fill Their "Baskets."** If you as a parent change your schedule to give your child the one-on-one attention they need during the day, they are less likely to be demanding at bedtime. Amy McCreedy, author of "The Me, Me, Me Epidemic," suggests giving your child at least 10-15 minutes of uninterrupted, all-about-them time which will fulfill their emotional needs.
- **Set a Routine.** After dinner have your children start to wind down by tidying up their room, finding a book to read, and picking a few stuffed animals to bring to bed. Having a set routine will in time cue your child's brain and body to wind down and tell them that its time to sleep.
- **Prepare For The Next Day.** Have your child pack their lunch, get their backpack ready, and set out their outfit for the next day. Preparing their lunch and clothes gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility and it also makes a smooth morning.
- **Take Tech Out Of The Bedroom.** Create a rule that all electronics need to be turned off an hour or so before bed. The blue light that many handheld devices emit actually promote wakefulness.
- **Be Consistent.** If bedtime is 8 p.m. one night, 8:30 p.m. the next night, and then 9:15 p.m. on the weekends, there is no actual set routine and your child will think that bedtime is negotiable. Bedtime should be the same everyday because kids need a certain amount of sleep each night whether it's a school day or the weekend.

