



Helpful Back-to-School Transition Tips from the NKC School District

Transitioning from a lazy summer schedule to a disciplined school routine can be a challenge! Thanks to Chad Sutton and Michelle Cronk at the North Kansas City School District for these tips that should help you and your elementary students adjust without a hitch.

Address back-to-school school jitters in advance.

Heading back to school can cause nervousness in any child, and starting a new school can be especially daunting. Visit the school with your child. Helping your child find their classroom, locker and lunchroom will ease their anxieties. Call the school in advance to make sure the teacher will be available to meet your child while there.

Review all information sent by the school.

As soon as it arrives, read through all of the school's material. It should include important information like your child's teacher, room number, school supplies required, sign-ups for after-school sports and activities, school calendar dates, bus transportation, health and emergency forms, and volunteer opportunities. Having that information in hand will help relieve back-to-school stress.

Re-establish bedtime and mealtime routines.

At least one week before school starts you should re-establish bedtime and mealtime routines, especially breakfast. Prepare your child for this change by talking about the benefits of school routines in terms of not becoming over tired or overwhelmed by school work and activities. Include pre-bedtime reading and household chores if these were suspended during the summer.

Buy school supplies early

Take your child for school supplies as early as possible and fill their backpack a week before school starts. Be sure to use the school's checklist. Some teachers require specific supplies, so save receipts for items that you may need to return later. If you don't have the list, check the school district's website.



Help your child write a letter to his teacher.

If your child remains especially nervous about his or her new teacher and classroom, suggest writing a letter to the teacher. Possible topics include what he or she liked about school last year, favorite hobbies, a special pet, family members or what he or she hopes to learn this year. After finishing the letter, your child could draw a picture or decorate it with stickers, then give it to the teacher on the first day of school.

Select a good place to do homework

Give older children the option of studying in their room or a quiet area of the house. Younger children usually need an area set aside in the family room or kitchen to facilitate adult monitoring, supervision, and encouragement.

Select a spot to keep backpacks and lunch boxes.

If your home doesn't have a "drop zone" that is so popular in new home designs today, designate a spot for your child to place their school belongings as well as important information sent home for you to see. Explain that emptying their backpack each evening is part of their responsibility.

Stay in close communication with your child's teacher.

Children respond to transitions differently and you want to ensure that your child is feeling successful both academically and socially throughout the school year.

Get involved in your child's school.

As a parent, the more you are involved and present at your child's school, the more opportunities you may have to develop relationships with other parents, which can lead to new friendships for your child.

Support your child as they become independent.

At first, your kids may be very dependant on you as they make a new transition. While this is naturally and absolutely okay, be sure to gradually work on your child's independence. This will help them become more responsible and develop relationships with other students.