

## Minimize First Day Jitters

The start of the school year is an exciting and sometimes scary time for children. Not knowing what to expect that first day often leads to nervous stomachs and sleepless nights before the first day of school. Advance preparation can help relieve some of your child's anxiety.

If possible, visit the school before the first day of school either at a scheduled event or by appointment. Even if your child is a returning student, it's been a whole summer since he's walked the halls, and a little refresher doesn't hurt.

Talk about your child's fears and expectations in the weeks before school starts. Recount some of your memories as a child. While it's best to focus on the positive, a funny story or two about your past struggles could help put things in perspective too.

The week before school starts, work on getting back into a routine. Set your child's alarm each morning, and have him get up and go through the school-morning rituals. This will help reset his body clock and get him ready to get moving in the morning.

Check out the school supply list, and make sure your child is prepared. If you did not receive a school supply list ahead of time, ensure your child has pencils, a two-pocket folder, and a small spiral notebook for the first day of school. He's sure to bring home a list of supplies after the first day.

Get everything ready the night before. Prepare your child's lunch, set out backpacks and outfits, and decide what will be on the breakfast menu. Then, send your child to bed early. He's sure to have trouble falling asleep, so some extra quiet time may help settle his nerves.

Get your child up a little early that first day to alleviate some of the stress of rushing through the morning routine. Leave the television off to ensure your child keeps moving.

After school, talk to your child. Kids are notorious for one-word answers, so ask open-ended questions that require a longer response. "Tell me what you did today." "What is your teacher like?" and "What was the best part of your day?" are some great starters.

We hope your child is looking forward to his return to school. Some advance preparation is sure to help! Most of all, send him to school rested, prepared, and ready to tackle the year ahead.