

## **NSLAP WELLNESS TIP: September is (almost) here! Back-to-school tips**

*The following is an article excerpt from Homewood Human Solutions™, your health and wellness provider.*

Come September, the carefree days of summers are replaced with regimented school days and disciplined evenings spent doing homework. Here are some quick tips – both practical and psychological – to help pave the way for a smoother transition into the new school year.

### **The Whole Family is Involved in Preparing for School**

It may be children who attend classes, but all family members are impacted by school routines and changing schedules. Some students and families anticipate school positively and with enthusiasm, while for others, it signals an unwelcome return to academics and a predictable Monday-to-Friday structure. Either way, being prepared for the change helps!

### **Practical Preparation**

At the practical level, prepare for the first day of school by taking the following actions:

- Procure appropriate "school clothes", including a pair of "indoor shoes" for students in the primary grades.
- Buy school supplies in advance. School teachers surveyed established a list of the top 15 supplies children need (see below).
- Ensure that your emergency contacts are known and readily accessible to your child, the school, baby-sitters or after-school programs, etc.
- For younger children, identify and practice age-appropriate safety procedures to manage traffic, strangers, school buses, after-school activities and so on.
- Establish bedtime and morning routines a week or so in advance of the start of school, so that sleep schedules and wake up times are in line with the school timetable.
- For children under 12, organize before and after-school care so that as a working parent you can rest assured that your children are safe and well-cared for.
- Strategize and develop "back up plans" for days when your child is sick or there's a "storm day", so that emergencies don't catch you off guard.

### **Psychological Preparation**

On an emotional level, supporting and encouraging your child as they head off to school is important. For children who love being at school this is not generally a problem, but for those who struggle with either the social or academic aspects of attending school, some thought and planning is required. Some ways to make the prospect of going to school more inviting are:

- Talk positively about the school process and your child's relationship with school, so that you set a tone of anticipated success. If your child counters your optimism with negative expectations, listen closely and attentively to what is being said and look for strategies to address these potential problems proactively.
- Younger children often benefit from visiting their classroom before classes start and holding a "dress rehearsal" for school routines. Even university age children appreciate having time to settle into their campus life ahead of time as a means of reducing the anxiety associated with being "the new kid on the block".
- Most of us find it easier to do things with a "buddy". If your child has no siblings attending their school, linking up with someone else who is in the same class can reduce the first day jitters.

Check out the following websites for more information:

<http://www.parenting-child-development.com/child-education.html>

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/>

<http://www.growinghealthykids.com/english/transitions/school/home/index.html>

### **Top 15 school supplies needed**

- Pencils
- Colour markers
- Scissors
- Math kits
- Calculators
- Notebooks
- Binders
- Pencil crayons
- White erasers
- Rulers
- Glue sticks
- Highlighters
- Lined paper
- Folders
- Backpacks

**Healthy lunch options to add to your grocery list**

- Low fat milk
- Low fat yogurt
- Low fat cheese
- String cheese
- Dried fruit
- Low sugar jams
- Veggies
- Rice cakes
- Chopped fruit
- Fruit to go

*For more information and support with how to get your children ready for school, along with resources and counseling in other life topics, visit the NSLAP website at [www.nslap.ca](http://www.nslap.ca). Please note that **NSLAP** is your “company” name when you register. When you call the NSLAP number at **1-866-299-1299** (Français: 1-866-398-9505; TTY: 1-888-384-1152), your call will be answered any time, day or night, 365 days per year.*