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Look out for children,
school is in.

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Back to school can also mean minor adjustments to lifestyle

Three words have been known to elicit very different responses in households over the years: Back to school. While exhausted parents no doubt greet those words with much excitement, trepidation is most often the response of children.

For children, the back-to-school blues are instantly associated with waking up early, homework and structure, a far cry from the sleep-in, stay-up-late, care-free days of summer. While readjusting to school days can be tough for parents and children alike, there are ways to make that inevitable return to school a little easier on all parties.

* Get a small head start. Though kids might not be too appreciative, having children go to bed earlier and wake up earlier in the days leading up to the first day of school will make it a lot easier to do so once school starts. Parents, too, should get in on things, breaking from their own summertime routines a few days before school starts.

* The best laid plans... Even the most detail-oriented par-

ent can have plans go awry. For parents of children who are new to a school or new to school entirely, make sure to learn bus schedules or what traffic is like if you're going to be driving your child to school every day. Getting off on the right foot, particularly if your child will be attending a new school, is a good first step, so establishing a morning routine beforehand is important. At least for the first day when things can be a little too hectic, have your child prepare an outfit the night before. Choosing what to wear on the first day of school can be a long and drawn-out process for some kids, meaning it's better off done the night before than the morning of the first day.

* Speak about a new school. Many children have anxiety about the first day of school.

That's especially true of children who are starting in a new school. In such scenarios, parents should talk to their kids beforehand, asking them what they're excited about and what they might be anxious about. In the days leading up to the first day of school, talk to children and let them know what they have to look forward to at their new school.

Focusing on the positives as opposed to any negatives will likely make kids excited to go to school and should make the first day go a lot

more smoothly.

* Give them some work to do. Getting kids to do homework can be one of the more difficult back-to-school adjustments to make. Throughout summer, children grow accustomed to spending most of their time at home pursuing leisure, like watching television, or playing in the yard or elsewhere. Children can find it hard to give up such leisure time to do homework instead.

To combat this problem and make sure your kids start off strong this school year, give them some work before school starts, such as reading a book or even something like writing a journal. Doing so when the weather is nice will get them acclimated to making the same sacrifice once the work starts piling up the first few weeks of school.



FIRST DAY: A Young student skips up the sidewalk to the first day of a new school year at Mackenzie-Smith Bennett. - Matthew Reid photo

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