



Tips for back-to-school jitters

(NC)—Going back-to-school in September can be the biggest transition of the year, say education specialists. Children may experience a lot more anxiety about the approaching change in routine than is readily seen — and without doubt, the pressures of back-to-school schedules impact the whole family.

"Children struggle with the thoughts of change and unknown demands the same way adults do," says Dr. Donna McGhie-Richmond, educational specialist with Kumon Math and Reading

Centres. "We've all experienced that dreaded shift from vacation to work and it's the same feeling for children heading back-to-school. Transition anxieties are normal and to be expected."

Parents can help by taking the fear out of the unknown. Prepare children well in advance, says Kumon's expert, and be explicit. With young children, for example, create a schedule and post it on the fridge. The structure will give them comfort because they'll know what to expect. Consider these

guidelines too:

- Re-instate bedtimes and begin to wake children earlier at least a week before school begins. It's important for them to be fresh and well rested.
- Talk about how they feel heading back-to-school and that nervousness is to be expected.
- Talk about what they will do on the first day, such as meeting new teachers, entering a new classroom, and catching up with friends and making new ones.
- Involve children in purchasing and organizing

back-to-school items, from school supplies to clothing.

- Ensure you are available after school, or on that first evening, to talk about the experiences of the first day. Plan a special dinner, or dessert. Make it an event to celebrate.
- Talk about learning goals for the year. Negotiate a regular study time and establish a regular place for homework.
- Encourage and display confidence in your child. Your confidence will produce confidence in him or her.



Back to school sleep tips for a productive year



(NC)—All parents want their children to be alert and ready to learn when they head to school every day.

Helping them get a good and regular night's sleep is key. Studies have shown that lack of a good night's sleep

can impair a school-age child's learning, memory, attention, and concentration. But parents can take these simple steps to ensure their kids get the best possible amount and quality of sleep each night so they are happy and productive at school.

Set and stick to a regular bedtime. To function at their best, children need at least nine hours of sleep every night. A regular bedtime routine can help them get a full night of quality sleep. Don't over-schedule your

child. Too many after-school activities and commitments can keep kids from precious sleep. Consider their bedtime and allow time for homework, extra-curricular activities, chores and down time so they can wind down before sleep.

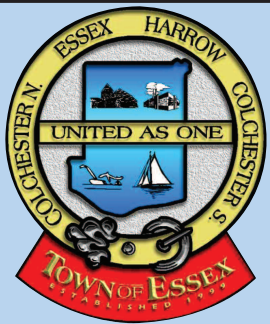
Avoid sugar and caffeine too close to bedtime. Consuming sugar and caffeinated drinks, chocolate and sweets in the evening can make it more difficult for kids to fall asleep. Try a glass of milk instead.

Help your child unwind in the evening. Tackle book reports and other homework either after school or in the early evening. Allow at least one hour before bedtime to relax and unwind, with a routine like taking a bath or reading to help transition into sleep mode.

Don't allow your child to fall asleep in front of the television. Noise from a television, radio, or even loud conversations can keep your child from deep, restful sleep.

Pay attention to your child's mattress. Mattresses have a lifespan of about eight to ten years, so handing down old mattresses to your kids is not recommended. And children's bodies change quickly; so the mattress they slept on as an eight-year-old may not be appropriate as a teen. Ensure they have enough comfort and support to fall asleep, stay asleep and awake refreshed.

More information about sleep is available online at www.bettersleep.ca.



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