

Back to School Tips

Top Ten Tips to Reduce the Stress and Strain

1 Review your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)

In preparation for the new school year, arrange a meeting in early September with all the education and health professionals involved with your child's care. This will give you the opportunity to discuss the goals to be focused on for the new term and identify which strategies did and didn't work last year.

2 Organize your routine

It is important to set a number of rules and rituals in advance so that the return of school goes as smoothly as possible. In the morning you can plan a routine that incorporates what time your child gets up, how they get dressed, what they eat for breakfast and the route they take to school.

3 Get ready the night before

Get ready for the next day the night before. Decide which backpack they should use, what uniform they might need and whether they are having a packed lunch or a school lunch that day. A bedtime routine should be agreed on and followed from Sunday through to Thursday night.

4 Stock up on school supplies

A second set of school supplies should be kept at home. This will be invaluable for those times when your child loses his or her planner, pencil case, protractor, etc. during the school day.

5 Communication with the school

Determine who will be your regular school contact and how you will communicate with him or her, whether it's by phone, text or email. In this way, you can be quickly and regularly informed of any issues regarding your child.

6 After-school activities

Plan and organize a number of after-school activities that can build on your child's strengths or help with their weaknesses. For example, if your child would benefit from more physical activity, find out if sports or dance would help. Joining a chess club could help if they needed to improve their focus and information recall. This is also a great way to encourage them to build friendships with their peers.

7 Need help with homework?

It can take a child with ADHD three times as long to complete homework at home compared with working in a structured classroom setting. Plan with the school how best this situation can be handled. Consider a tutor to help your child with specific subjects.

8 Make a calendar together

Being able to foresee deadlines gives children a sense of control over their lives. Talk to your child about daily, weekly and monthly schedules and incorporate school, social and extra-curricular activities into the calendar. The more involvement your child has in the planning of the schedule and the greater the repetition of activities and schedules the more likely successful outcomes will occur.

9 Set goals together

Discuss with your child what might be achieved in this school year. Focus on strengths as well as areas that need improvement. Make the goals realistic and achievable and decide on some practical ways to reach them. Agree to review together with the school at half term intervals.

10 Review medication

If your child is on treatment, talk to his or her doctor a week or so before school starts, particularly if your child was on a medication break during the summer.



Home/School Communication Plan

To be filled out by the child's parent or caregiver

Student's name

Date

When you meet with your child's teachers, it's best to be as prepared as possible. The questions below may be helpful for you as you talk with the teachers. Write any notes from your meeting below the questions. You may want to make a copy for the teacher, so that you both have the same goals in mind for your child.

- 1 How can we help my child stay organized with homework and get assignments completed on time?
- 2 Are assignments too big for my child? Would it be possible to break them down into smaller, more manageable steps?
- 3 How can I offer positive reinforcement for improved behaviour in the classroom?
- 4 Could the school counsellor/psychologist provide support in addition to what you're doing in the classroom?
- 5 Is there extra work you'd suggest I do with my child after school or on weekends to improve his or her progress and skills?
- 6 Do you think a change in seating would help my child stay focused?
- 7 Are you seeing progress in my child's attention and behaviour?
- 8 Would you be willing to fill out daily or weekly symptom checklists to help monitor progress?
- 9 Are there areas/times of day that my child's progress seems to fluctuate?

Additional questions you may have for your child's teacher:

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Symptom Checklist

Record Your Child's Symptoms

It is important to share the information in this checklist with your child's doctor.

Once the symptom checklist is complete, click "Print" to download a printer-friendly version of this checklist.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
School				
Avoids or puts off tasks that require sustained mental effort or concentration				
Makes careless mistakes in schoolwork				
Frequently fails to finish schoolwork				
Fidgets or squirms when seated, or leaves seat in classroom				
Blurts out answers without raising hand				
Home				
Cannot seem to sit still at mealtimes				
Does not seem to listen when spoken to				
Loses things such as toys, pencils, or books				
Often runs or climbs excessively when not supposed to				
Frequently forgets things he or she is supposed to do				
Friends and Peers/Community				
Butts into conversations or games				
Acts "on the go" or as if "driven by a motor"				
Does not wait his or her turn during play or other activities				
Talks excessively or constantly				
Seems restless and fidgety while doing quiet activities				

Please note: This symptom checklist does not replace a visit with a physician. If you have questions about the checklist or your answers, please consult a physician.

Day Planner



Weekday Planner

Having your child keep a checklist of the day's activities can be a great way to establish and reinforce a sense of routine throughout his or her day.

Who should use this tool?

The Weekday Planner is meant to be filled out by you and your child.

How should it be used?

Print out a copy of the Weekday Planner for your child at the beginning of each week, and help him or her fill it out. It should be updated daily and used to record and track all activities that are scheduled or reoccurring regularly. Make sure your child keeps it somewhere safe but accessible. Make it his or her responsibility to update the Weekday Planner frequently.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Pack for School <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Pack for School <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Pack for School <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Pack for School <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Pack for School <input type="checkbox"/> _____
School	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Books for homework	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Books for homework	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Books for homework	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Books for homework	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Books for homework
After School	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____
Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Supper <input type="checkbox"/> Lay out clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Brush teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Supper <input type="checkbox"/> Lay out clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Brush teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Supper <input type="checkbox"/> Lay out clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Brush teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Supper <input type="checkbox"/> Lay out clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Brush teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Supper <input type="checkbox"/> Lay out clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Brush teeth

Homework Tips



For Parents

- Find a way to **communicate** directly with the child's teacher about homework.
- Use homework and notebook **organizers**. Stress the importance of writing down assignments and bringing home the necessary books.
- Provide a **quiet area** for studying.
- Make sure **distractions**, such as the TV, are not available at study time.
- Help your child or teen break assignments into **smaller parts**.
- Separate study time with **regular breaks**. Set a timer to keep this schedule.
- When homework is finished, **praise or reward** your child (and make sure the backpack is prepared for the next day!)

Possible School Accommodations

- **Reduce** homework or identify essential work first
- Assign **shorter** or even multiple choice assignments instead of extended essays or reports
- **Email** homework assignments to parents
- **Check** child's agenda to ensure tasks are written down
- **Allow** dictation onto tape recorder or laptop
- Allow students with ADHD to **remain at school** to finish homework or to complete it during the day
- Assign students with ADHD a "**study buddy**" to help them stay on track
- Promote homework as a **fun and useful** learning opportunity rather than a burden

Homework Planner

Writing out each assignment as soon as your child receives it will help you and your child remember the work that needs to be finished and help keep your child on track.

Organization of time and completion of school work may be encouraging for your child.

Subject	Homework	Due Date	Completed
Math			
Science			
English/ Language Arts			
Social Studies/ History			
Art			
Other			

Helpful hints to try with your child at home:

- Getting clothes ready, homework done and book bag packed the night before school
- Getting plenty of sleep so concentration may be easier the next day
- Eating breakfast every morning before going to school

Here are some ideas that might help your child concentrate better in class. You may talk to the teacher about them:

- Sitting away from other students who may be distracting
- Setting up a special quiet study area
- Sitting in the front of the room and away from the windows
- Sitting near a student who can be a "study buddy"