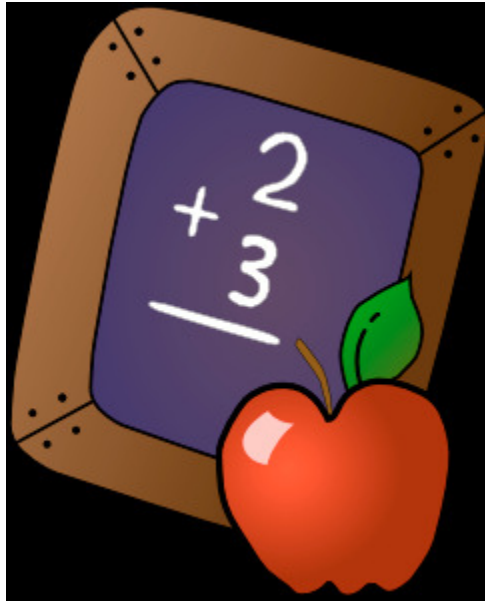


## Back to School Transition Made Easy



And in that month, there was school.

Going back to school can be a challenge for some children. After all, summer has had quite a different set of expectations and outcomes. Whether your child is eagerly awaiting or anxiously worrying there are strategies that parents and caregivers can use, a 3 R's for back to school.

**Routine:** Readjusting to the routine that your household will use during the school year is a good place to start. Getting up early is hard after just a weekend; imagine what it's like to do after several weeks. With anything, practice makes it easier, so gradually reintroduce the routine of getting up and ready and, more importantly, getting a good nights sleep. Those first few weeks back at school demand lots of energy. As a teacher, I often hear families say how difficult it was to get the kids out of bed in the morning and see students who struggle to stay awake, let alone alert, in the afternoon.

It's still summer though, so introduce some fun. Have a picnic for breakfast or make order pages and leave the choices on the door for early morning room service. The kids can even assemble the trays the night before. Or make menus and play restaurant in the morning. Children enjoy waiting on the parents when it's for play.

Before bedtime, have a spa basket and give each other back or foot rubs along with the bedtime story. **Routine doesn't mean boring.**

Relationships: Relationships is the second R. Has your child seem classmates and school friends over the summer? For some children, not just the shy ones, reconnecting before school starts is important. Arrange a few play-dates if possible, Perhaps, a few families might all like to get together at the school playground to play and share summer stories.

Not all children will know their new class teacher. To help with this ask your child a few questions to open a discussion. Do you think your new teacher will be male or female? Young or old? Tall or Short? What color of hair, eyes, etc? Of course, its only guessing at the this stage so throw in a few humorous curves to balance out any concerns. Will your new teacher be human or a robot? How many arms and legs? Orange or green hair? Purple or blue skin? The way your child answers these questions will give you insights into any fears or other issues.

Remembering: Routine, relationships and number three, remembering. Children lose a significant portion or previous learning over the summer. To restart the learning, visit the library and choose a few fiction and some non-fiction books. Have a pretend school playtime and let your child be the teacher and you the student. Or a group of kids can play and take turns being the teacher. Even teenagers love to have a go at teaching at the family adults. After all, at this point in their lives, they know everything and we have been left behind in the past.

Card games are a great way to practice math. For older kidlets, give them an outrageous play-money budget and some back to school flyers. Let them choose their supplies and challenge them to spend the whole thing. Or let it be unlimited and watch how excited they get about calculating and how much problem-solving work they do as they create lists in the thousands of dollars. Kids know they can't spend exorbitant amounts of money on supplies, but it's fun to dream. And the fun and laughter can make the reality easier to accept.

An additional almost R is to oRganize for the return to school. Supplies and clothes can consume hours and hours. Although it's hard to say good-bye to holidays, it's better to deal with these issues before the hassle of last minute adds to the stress.

Readjusting to the routine, reconnecting with friends and restarting the remembering are the 3 R's of transitioning back to school. Organize some essentials. Add lots of fun and the return to school will be R positive, er, I mean A+.