

Summer Newsletter

Back to school



K.I.D.S. Therapy

Back-to-School

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School is around the corner and it is important to start prepping your child for the transition from barbecues and pool days to cooler weather and school days! A great way to do this is to begin a more structured routine. This may include family chores, a sleep schedule, and planning for an organized school year.

Put Your Kids to Work!

As summer fades away, it is important to get back into a routine for your children. Not only will this help your child adjust to the upcoming school schedule, but it might also help your whole family transition out of summer. Giving children chores is a great way to develop a routine, create family memories, as well as work on fine and gross motor skills. Kids can do a variety of chores around the house and many kids LOVE to help! Including your child in your household activities makes them feel important and needed. It also develops their motor skills, speech and language skills, and pre-academic skills, while teaching life-skills in the process. The next time you find yourself doing chores around the house, you may find yourself thinking "could my kid(s) help me with this?"

TIPS

- Research what chores your child may be capable of handling. Sometimes a chore is beyond a child's ability level, but sometimes a slight modification can help a child achieve success.
- Consider making a specific time of the day when most of the chores are performed. Everyone working together is much more motivating than one person slaving away while enviously listening to others laughing and playing.
- Make chore charts. Involve the kids in the process of making a chart. Make it fun! The more children feel they are involved in making decisions, the more they will take ownership of those responsibilities. Consider holding a family council before implementing a new chore chart system. Allow some decisions to be made by the kids.
- Consider your rewards. Are you going to make chores a requirement for an allowance? Are you going to allow chores to be done in exchange for other privileges? Is a sticker system the best fit for your family? Determine what reward system would best work with your family. Don't forget to gently stress the natural and obvious rewards of having a clean and organized home.
- Make chore charts visual. Many children need a visual prop to help them completely understand new ideas. Making a chore chart or system visual can help them stay focused. Consider if people in your family have other learning tendencies. For example, if you have a child who really needs to hear to understand, consider reading the chores aloud to them. People who are tactile and kinetic learners may need to physically cross off items on a list, or move completed cards from their flower pot, etc. (See below!)

Flower Pot Chore list!

For labeling chores, print off or cut out numerous flower shapes. They should be big enough to write chore names on them. Use plastic or Styrofoam cups filled with beans as your pots, one for each person with chores to do. Make one extra cup to put the chores back into when they are completed. Write the names of your family members or workers on your flower pots. Let the kids decorate their pots and watch your flowers bloom!

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Inside this issue:

- Putting your kids to work: Chores to help your child and family!
- New School Year Jitters- setting up a sleep schedule
- Backpack Tips
- Making a Study space and organizing binders

Take a look at our website, <http://www.kidstherapyassociates.com/news/newsletter.cfm> to view our ***It's Time to Go Back to School*** social story and more!

Chore Examples:

- Clean windows and mirrors with a squirt bottle.
- Dust counter tops.
- Water plants with a small watering can.
- Help set the table.
- Separate darks and light laundry, fold socks into sock ball, fold towels, washcloths etc.
- Wash the car within reach, scrub tires with a brush, help rinse with a hose
- Help dig holes for plants.
- And of course, clean up toys in the room, make the bed, put away clothing etc.



New School Year Jitters

How to help your child overcome anxiety by promoting organization and a good night's sleep!

Sleep for Success

Many children have a difficult time getting to sleep. With the excitement of school upon us, it is important to set up strategies to help our children get a good night's rest to be ready for their days. A consistent bedtime routine can help a child with those back to school jitters be fully prepared for the long days ahead.

TIPS: Establish a bedtime routine. Make sure your child has enough physical activity during the day. Encourage a decrease in activity when your child starts to slow down. Listen to quiet music. Keep your house as orderly, quiet and dim as possible during the evening. Provide a room to sleep in free of clutter. Avoid playing in your child's bed. Read a social story (or have your older child compose and read a social/sleep story to himself) about going to bed. Use a weighted blanket of heavy pillows. Avoid sleepwear with adverse tactile stimuli. Try guided meditation (deep breathing and visualization of your child's body slowing down).

Organizing: Getting off on the right step

One of the most basic habits you can teach your child is to study in one place and stay organized. Help your child choose a particular location that he/she can use each study time. An effective workplace has adequate space to spread out, is well lit, has the needed supplies close at hand and is relatively free from distractions.

Study Space

Drop off station: Pick a spot (preferably next to your study space) where your child knows to put his/her school stuff and backpack when they first come home.

Location: Work with your child to designate a "homework" space in your home. If the study space is in a high traffic area, designate quiet study times and one fixed spot in the room where to put school stuff (e.g., a shelf, a box, etc.).

Good lighting: The best study set ups include two light sources including an overhead lamp that lights the whole room and a smaller desk lamp that puts focused light where you need it.

Comfort: If the chair is too high or you have to strain your neck and shoulders to see the computer, you will fatigue easier or need to get up and move around more.

Elbow room: Make sure you have enough space to spread out your books and to work on your computer at the same time.

Have supplies organized: Put together a homework supply basket including basics like paper, pencils, erasers, stapler, pencil sharpener, glue, etc. Organized supplies will help your child be more independent and complete homework with fewer disruptions.

Environment: Some children choose to study while listening to music and like having background noise. Background sounds such as TV and speech (talking) tends to be more distracting than music. As a general rule, you should try to control and limit distractions such as telephone, T.V., and interruptions from others during study time.

Have a homework schedule: Help your child make a homework schedule including breaks. It is often best to complete more difficult homework first while your child is most alert. Use a timer to help your child balance homework tasks with breaks. Have designated places for unfinished homework and finished homework. These can be labeled boxes, file folders, or shelves.

Binder Organization

To set up your three ring binder, use color tab dividers and a separate notebook for each subject, or all subjects in a notebook divided into five sections –

- 1. To do** – homework assignments; worksheets you start in class but need to finish later; directions for projects; test study sheets
- 2. Current topic** – materials related to the topic you are currently working on in class, class notes; articles or printouts related to topic; completed worksheets; graded homework assignments
- 3. Past topic** – often teachers require students to hold onto papers for at least an entire semester. This section includes all those papers that were in your current topic tab, once they have been completed; returned tests, paper, and quizzes from old topics
- 4. Reference** – course syllabus; participation rubric; information sheets, reading lists, reference sheets
- 5. Paper** – last but not least, a paper section, fully stocked!

Back Pack Tips

Backpacks are one of the key components to help your child succeed! Help your student get in the habit of completing four easy steps each day they come home from school.

- 1. Unload** everything once home
- 2. Sort** items in your appropriate homework spot.
- 3. File, Punch, or Glue.** Remove any loose papers and put them in the right place in your binders or folders.
- 4. Toss** out any trash accumulated

Finally, backpacks should be a helpful tool, not a hindrance. Be careful about how much weight is put in your child's backpack.

A child's backpack should weigh no more than 10% of his or her body weight. This means a student weighing 100 pounds should not wear a loaded school backpack heavier than 10 pounds.



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