

# Good breakfast key to being calm on first day of class

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Want your student to stay calm and focused as they begin the new school year this fall? Make sure they eat a quality breakfast including protein and quality carbohydrates, says a nutrition expert at Washington University in St. Louis.

While many children experience some anticipation and anxiety about the first day of school, eating something in the morning is essential.

“It is key to how they perform in that classroom,” says Connie Diekman, M.Ed., RD, director of University [Nutrition](#) and former president of the American Dietetic Association.

If parents really want to help their children maximize the classroom experience, there are a few things they can do as they plan what to eat for breakfast.

“Make sure you have a little bit of protein and little [carbohydrate](#),” says Diekman. “When we look at that carbohydrate piece, what we want to focus on is your better quality carbohydrates, the longer energy carbohydrates like whole grain.”

Diekman suggests a bowl of oatmeal with milk.

“That can give you some energy to the brain,” she says. “That milk begins to work on the brain chemicals, as well as the carbohydrate.”

She also suggests fruit, possibly having a fruit and yogurt parfait.

“Some sugar from the fruit that gives (your kids) that quick burst of energy, but the milk, the yogurt, has a lot of compounds in it besides the protein that can help the body with relaxation, attention, all of these factors,” she says.

Mornings are generally stressful times for families. Quick, nutritious morning meals are key, Diekman says.

She suggests peanut butter on whole grain bread or a smoothing with peanut butter, yogurt and fruit.

“Trying to get some fruit in there would be great,” she says.

The darker the fruit, the better, Diekman says. Blueberries, strawberries, apricots, blackberries and raspberries all contain a lot of phytonutrients that can help the body with relaxation during stressful times.

Fruits, and also nuts, contain antioxidant nutrients that can help the body overcome stress.

“It is so important that we equip kids, and mom and dad too, with something to eat before they enter the classroom or their job, because the studies are very, very clear,” Diekman says. “Performance in a classroom is so much better in breakfast eaters than in those who skip.”

Source: Washington University in St. Louis

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