

Getting kids ready for the new school year

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(HealthDay)—There are a number of things you can do to ensure your kids have a smooth start to the new school year.

Don't wait until the first day of class to seek help. Schools are open over the summer to address any concerns you or your [child](#) might have, and the best time to get help might be one to two weeks before school opens, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) suggests.

The AAP, in a news release, outlined more ways you should plan ahead.

Talk to your kids about the positive aspects of going back to school, such as seeing old friends and meeting new ones, and the good experiences they've had in the past at school.

It might be a good idea, also, to start your child on a school sleep/wake schedule a week or so before classes start so that they don't have any issues on the first couple of days back at school.

Also try to find other kids in the neighborhood with whom your child can walk to school or ride on the bus.

If your child is starting at a new school, go to any available orientations and opportunities to tour the school before the first day. Bring your child to the school a few days prior to [class](#) to play on the playground and get comfortable in the new setting.

If you feel it's necessary in order to reduce stress, drive or walk your child to school and back on the first day, and arrive early.

Backpack preparation is also important before [school](#) starts. Choose a pack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back. The backpack should never weigh more than 20 percent of your child's body weight. Go through the pack with your child each week and remove unneeded items.

The pack should be adjusted so that the bottom sits at your child's waist,

and kids should always use both shoulder straps.

More information: SOURCE: American Academy of Pediatrics, news release, August 2018

The American College of Emergency Physicians offers a [back-to-school health checklist](#).

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