



BACK-TO-SCHOOL

TIPS FOR MOMS



Tips to get back in the game!

Here are tips from Jan Faull, child development and behavior specialist, on how to get the school year off with a perfect morning routine!

When that first day arrives, think of yourself as the getting-out-the-door coach. As the days go by, you'll back off and give only verbal and visual cues. By thoughtfully withdrawing your support, you give your children the opportunity to grasp hold of their responsibilities.

Explain how life is going to change. A week prior to the first day, offer a precise description of the morning routine: "I'll wake you up at 7 o'clock: you need to be dressed by 7:30 for breakfast. I expect you ready with your backpack, lunch and coat to walk out the door at 8 o'clock." Young children need practice. For some, a pictorial chart including each step really helps.

Start getting kids in bed early. Begin a week before school gets underway. You can't force them to sleep, but you can see if they're snuggled in bed looking at books.

Get yourself up and ready first. If you work outside the home, this step is crucial. All goes more smoothly those first days when you're available to guide your children each step of the way.

Give reminders. Most kids learn to move through the morning routine in a timely fashion. Others need reminders until high school graduation: "Son, I think you forgot to brush your teeth."

State the obvious. "Your coat is on, now put on your shoes." Later, give one-word directives. Just say "shoes," or ask, "What are you supposed to do next?"

Avoid yelling and harsh treatment. Negative ingredients can quickly become embedded in the routine. No parent likes sending their child out the door after a screaming match.

Tack on an additional task. Once the morning schedule becomes routine, you can add an element: throwing dirty clothes in the hamper, making beds, putting together lunches.