

Getting Ready to Go “Back To School”

As the lazy days of summer are quickly passing, it's now time to change gears and get your family into “school mode.” Discuss with your children a plan that will prepare them to get back to the routine of daily school life. Begin by moving bedtime 10-15 minutes earlier every week, until school starts. When you adjust gradually to early sleeping and early waking, the change isn't quite so drastic. Direct your children to get dressed and eat breakfast, as soon as they wake up. No more lounging around in pajamas, save that for the weekends. Once they are dressed and ready to go, plan to leave the house, even if it's to walk the dog. Getting into the habit of leaving in the morning will help with the transfer to school time. Check that they have completed required schoolwork and read suggested books. Presenting a positive approach, have a conversation with your children regarding how much fun it will be to start a new year in a higher grade. Also, that it will feel good to see old friends and meet some new friends, too. If they share with you that they are anxious about their first day, assure them that everyone feels a little uneasy, even the teachers. Remind them that once they see their friends their fears will fade away. Ensure that backpacks, lunch boxes, clothes and uniforms, if required, are ready to go. If the teacher has sent a list of supplies, buy them early. These items sell out very quickly and no one wants to be frantically running around the night before school starts, looking for items.

If your child is starting kindergarten, take advantage of any orientations that the school may have prior to the first day. It's always a benefit for your children to meet their teachers. Drive or walk to the new school often. If it's open, walk around so that your little one can become familiar with the lay of the land. Simple things like not knowing where the toilets are can be traumatic. If you know other children who will be starting the same school, arrange for some play dates. Read books about kindergarten. Some of my favorites are; *Mrs. Bindergarten Gets Ready For Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate, *Froggy Goes To School* by Jonathan London, *Off To Kindergarten* by Tony Johnston, and *Pete The Cat Rocking In My School Shoes* by Eric Litwin. There are many, many more to choose from. You can take your child to the bookstore and let them pick out some books. Don't make plans to go on long trips close to the start of school. Do establish a schedule for homework, bath time, and bedtime for when school starts.

Being prepared before the big day will help both children and parents to have a smooth transition. Showing your children that you are enthusiastic and excited about the new school year will help them to feel same. We hope you have a happy first day of school!

At Woodcrest School, we have several orientation dinners prior to the start of school. Our new families will meet the specialists, teachers, parent group members, and other new families. We also encourage new students to attend our summer camp in order to meet new friends and become familiar with our campus. Many of our camp counselors are also our playground and after school staff during the school year.

Shosh Byron

Executive Director