



Family & Children's Aid
for every child, a home



The Best First Week of School Ever!!

"I came to the realization that I spend a lot of time preparing for summer. Christmas and other major holidays get the same treatment. Birthdays are an event. But back-to-school gets lost in the shuffle. I buy the school supplies and pack the lunches, but I don't give it the same attention I give to other big events in the year. And that may be why we spend that first month of school in such disarray."

Lori, Everyday Truth

Preparation Makes Mornings MUCH More Manageable



For many children, the period in the morning before school is a prime problem time. "Brush your teeth. Comb your hair. Get your clothes on. Eat breakfast... It sounds like a few, simple things, but for kids who have difficulties with attention, they are not able to process all of those commands at once." Explains Dennis Bieber, Program Supervisor of Community Based Services at Family & Children's Aid. He suggests lots

of preparation, creating routines, and giving children gentle reminders to ease morning stress. "If you have a child who gets easily distracted, you have to be strategic in staying two or three steps ahead."

Read

Simple Tips for Back-to-School Success

LaQueshia Outlaw, IICAPS Mental Health Counselor at Family & Children's Aid, offers these back-to-school tips:

- **PREPARE!!!** Put together a plan of buying materials that will help you during the school year for each class.
- Start assignments early so you do not get behind right away.
- Always visit the school and review your schedule if you are transitioning to a new school. Know where each of your classes will be located.
- Visit the school before the school year starts and practice finding short cuts to your class so you will make it to each class on time.
- Pack your backpack and clothes out the night before. Try to get as much as you can done the night before so you will not have to rush in the morning.

“When a child goes into crisis, the majority of the time it is because the adult around them went into crisis; they are just responding to what they see. And, if you are talking about mornings like that with a child who already has issues, it kind of sets them up for the rest of the day. It may take them a couple of hours for them to calm down and get back into the groove. The ultimate goal is to get the child to school in a way that they are prepared and ready to learn instead of anxious and upset from the way the morning went.” says Dennis

“A lot of the stress can be eased through establishing routines with some night before preparation. If you leave it to do in the morning, right before the child is leaving for school, you have added time pressures.”

To take some of the pressure off the back to school transition, Dennis suggests to start having children re acclimatize to a routine again. “The week before, start going to bed at whatever time they would go to bed during school and getting up at the time they’d normally need to in the morning, so they are somewhat more adjusted to the schedule and routine of going to school before school starts again.” Dennis also recommends that parents begin to talk with their kids about going back to school, “Especially the week before. Make it part of daily conversation.”

“Who knows their kids the best?” asks Dennis. “Parents, caregivers. They know their routines, their tendencies. There are some kids who, for whatever reason, are always going to struggle with the morning routine...which makes it even more important that the parent is ready and prepared.”

Even though getting things ready at night may seem like more work, leaving everything to the morning makes it much more stressful for the child and the parent. “Look at it from a preventative point of view - the more prepared a parent can be, the more available they are going to be to step in and guide their child. If parents can set up and create consistent, predictable routines,” advises Dennis, “the idea is that over time, it will become familiar and predictable to the child as well. It’s a simplistic way of looking at it, but it works. Creating a consistent, predictable, and structured routine not only benefits the child, but will also make the life of the parent better too.”

For children who have a hard time with transitions, Dennis offers these tips:

- Create consistent, predictable routines. It will make everyone’s lives easier.
- Getting as much possible done the night before. Can a lunch be made and put in the refrigerator the night before? Can clothes be laid out the night before?
- Make it a routine that as soon as your child comes home from school to check their backpack for relevant information so you don’t find out crucial information last minute or in the morning.
- Get up and complete all parental morning routines before waking your child so parents are freed to help their child as needed.
- Check out the school website. They’ll have tips on what to expect and how to be prepared for school to start.

Do



Make Animal Pencil Toppers

[And We Play](#) teaches you how to make fun pencil toppers using plastic animals. The tutorial uses dinosaurs but any plastic animal is fair game (pun intended!)

Laugh

What did the daddy buffalo
say to his son
when he dropped him
on the first day of school?

Bison

Teacher: You’ve got
your shoes on the wrong
feet.

Student: But these are
the only feet I’ve got!



Our mailing address is:
75 West Street, Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 748-5689
www.fcaweb.org

Family & Children’s Aid (FCA) provides high quality, innovative and responsive programs focused on emotional and behavioral well being that helps children faced with mental health challenges heal.