



Rosario Counseling & Associates August 2013 E-News



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Welcome Back

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Back to School!

Back to school for a new year or starting school for the first time can lead to mixed emotions for many children. The start of a new school year is an exciting time to see friends for some children while anxiety-producing for others. Many children, while they do not mention it, may feel apprehensive about a new routine, fitting in with classmates, and keeping up with the academic load or simply nervous about finding their way around a new building. Getting your child off to a good start to the school year can reduce uneasiness.

For a smooth transition try the following suggestions to help start your child's school year off on the right foot!

- 1. Gradually adjust Sleep Schedule:** Transition your child to a school sleep schedule by cutting back bedtime by 15 minutes until you have reached a desired bedtime for school. In addition wake your child up 15 minutes earlier each morning so they will be ready for bedtime.
- 2. Discuss a morning and afternoon routine before school starts:** A good start to the day can affect the whole family. Establish at a family meeting what time each child will be woken, together create a detailed list of what each person needs to accomplish, and then determine how much time each task will take. Establish a time to leave for the school day.

Create a plan for after school to include homework, after school activities, dinner and time for fun. If your family decides no TV or limited plug-in time during the week then this family meeting is the time to discuss it. As part of your evening routine have children pick out clothes for the next day before going to bed as well as teach each child to set backpacks by the door each evening.
- 3. Tour the school and meet with your child's teacher:** Familiarity can put children's anxiety at ease. In advance, visit the school to walk the building so they know where to find classrooms, cafeteria, and restrooms. Attend the "meet the teacher" nights. If your child has an IEP or a 504 plan then you can meet to discuss how you can best work with the teacher to implement the plan in their classroom.
- 4. Create obtainable goals:** Set reasonable goals for the school year by communicating clear expectations that can lead to a successful academic year. Completing assignments, turning them in when due, getting ready for school on time, good reports on behavior at school, and getting to bed on time are short term goals. Motivations to meet these goals are often enhanced with reinforcement- perhaps with a reward, praise and/or encouragement. There are all types of rewards such as staying up late on the weekend, a sleep over with a friend or even extra time for media use (video game, iPod, computer, TV, etc.).
- 5. Establish a homework routine:** Head off daily battles by planning homework times and a place for studying.

If your family is seeking support with the back-to-school transition, our experienced therapists can help. Please call our administrative office at (919) 649-5882 or send an email to manager@rosariocounseling.com for more information.