

## BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Pediatric Potential's founder **Laurie Kalb** offers these tips for **helping your child get ready for school:**



Many of you will start feeling the anxiety of first days of the new school year around mid-August. The laid back schedule of summer, particularly those last couple of weeks after camp ends, are such great breaks in routine. It makes it hard to imagine how you will be able to get the kids resettled for the routine of school. Some suggestions:

Try to get **back to school-year bedtimes and wake up times** at least a week before school starts so internal clocks reset. That may mean modifying your evening routines a little bit sooner than you might be inclined to do, but it will pay off as you get closer to the night before school begins.

Some children become anxious about the first day back because of concerns about new teachers, new classrooms, classmates, and other changes. It may help to **share** with them **how you've dealt with these unknowns** when you were little. Sometimes it helps to just talk it through so they know they are not alone in their fears. **Visiting the school** the week before it officially begins can also be helpful. Familiarize children with where their classrooms are located, and visit the teacher (briefly) if possible. Reviewing the locations of bathrooms, cafeteria and playgrounds can also be helpful, especially if your child is going to a new school building.

It will be helpful for your child to **know in advance of the first day what home routines you expect for the year**. Laying out meal, homework, bath and bedtime routines in advance make it easier for your child and helps your sanity, too. While kids may balk, routines are important to help them know what is expected and to make home a safe and relaxing place. **A wall calendar** in your kitchen indicating after school activities, practices, religious school and even your appointments is a helpful device for family communication. We recommend reviewing the calendar daily with younger children to help them anticipate the routine and events of the day. A daily schedule near the calendar is also a good tool for kids, especially if they have some difficulty with transitions and changes in routine.

Remember: a good teacher will have consistent classroom expectations and your children will quickly learn what is expected at school. Try the same at home - it will pay off!