



— Back-to-School Tips for Parents of — Children with Special Needs

A new school year means a new grade, new teachers, new goals, and maybe even a new school! In order to help you and your child with special needs be as successful as you can be, we've put together a list of eight helpful back-to-school tips that we hope will make the transition into a new school year a little easier for you and your child.

Organize all that paperwork

In the world of special education, there are lots of meetings, paperwork, and documentation to keep track of. Try to keep a family calendar of school events, special education meetings, conferences, etc. Setting up a binder or folder to keep your child's special education documentation, meeting notices, and IEPs in sequential order can also help you stay organized.

Start a communication log

Keeping track of all phone calls, e-mails, notes home, meetings, and conferences is important. Create a "communication log" for yourself in a notebook that is easily accessible. Be sure to note the dates, times, and nature of the communications you have.

Review your child's current IEP

The IEP is the cornerstone of your child's educational program, so it's important that you have a clear understanding of it. Note when the IEP expires and if your child is up for re-evaluation this year. Most importantly, be sure that this IEP still "fits" your child's needs! If you're unsure, contact the school about holding an IEP review meeting.

Relieve back-to-school jitters

Just talking about the upcoming year and

changes can help reduce some of that back-to-school anxiety! Talk to your child about exciting new classes, activities, and events that they can participate in during the new school year. If attending a new school, try to schedule a visit before the first day. With older students, it is sometimes helpful to explain the services and accommodations in their IEP so that they know what to expect when school begins.

Keep everyone informed

It's important that routine that will happen once school starts. You can even begin practicing your new schedule, focusing on morning and evening routines, and begin implementing them well in advance of the first day of school.

Stay up-to-date on special education news

Being knowledgeable about your child's IEP and their disability can help you become a better advocate for your child. Try to keep up-to-date on new special education legislation, news, and events. The more you know, the more prepared you will be to navigate the world of special education and successfully advocate for your child!

Attend school events

Take advantage of Open House, Back-to-School Night, and parent-teacher conferences to help you and your child get a feel for the school and meet the teachers, other staff, students, and families. Share the positives about working with your child, and let the teacher know about changes, events, or IEP concerns that should be considered for children in special education.

- www.readingrockets.org

News & Events

• JumpStreet Special Needs Hours

First Saturday of every month from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. The first hour (9:00am-10:00am) is exclusive to children with special needs and their families only, the second hour is open to the public. To find a location near you click link below: www.gotjump.com/

• Rays of Light Night Lights

Giving parents of special needs children 4 parent night out hours. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Friday of every month - 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, at White Rock United Methodist on the 1st Friday, and at Christ Foundry United Methodist Mission on the 3rd Friday for Spanish - speaking families. www.raysoflightdallas.org/programs

• AMC Sensory Friendly Nights

Sensory Friendly Film program is available on the second and fourth Saturday (family-friendly) and Tuesday evenings (mature audiences) of every month. Please check your local theatre listings for specific show-times. www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films

Resources

• **VIVA Pediatrics Resources**

In an effort to help our families, we constantly strive to provide them with relevant and helpful resources and information. Visit our resources page online at: www.vivaped.com/resources

For current events visit us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds

• **Care Starter App**

The Connections App is a complete resource guide for families of kids, teens and adults with special needs. Their goal is to help you find providers, organizations and other resources in your community to help you along your path of care. Download the CareStarter App now! www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp



• **The Parker Lee Project**

The Parker Lee Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families of children with medical needs obtain the necessary supplies & equipment, education, and support they need. While most supplies are covered by insurance, some are not, or not enough supplies are provided. If you have a need for medical supplies or have supplies to donate, please visit their website at www.theparkerleeproject.org

• **Texas Star Kids**

The Texas' Star Kids mandate threatens the lives of our weakest and most vulnerable little citizens. Join us in standing up for those who have no voice. Click this link to sign up: www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids
For more info visit: www.protecttxfragilekids.org

• **Thrive Magazine**

Need Resources for your child with special needs? Thrive Magazine shares resources and stories of other families in the DFW area who are living and thriving with special needs. www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory

• **Recognize a VIVA Star**

Viva Pediatrics has an Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to thank and recognize employees that go "above and beyond". Both employees and patient families are welcome to recognize a VIVA employee! Call one of our offices and let us know if a VIVA employee has gone above and beyond!



Get Healthy with Giggles

Back to School Health Tips

Summer is flying by! it's that time of year again, when we prepare for another upcoming school year. You may be busy gathering the list of supplies and filling the backpack, but we wanted to take a moment to share some tips to have a healthy start this back-to-school season.

- Wash your Hands
- We all know that the best way to avoid catching and spreading germs is by practicing good hygiene by hand washing. Consider teaching small children to sing a song while hand washing to ensure that an ample amount of time is spent scrubbing those germs away. Also remind your kids to cough or sneeze into the inside of the elbow rather than their hands to help keep those germs away from their fingers that touch everything.
- Get the shots
- In Texas, there are certain requirements for vaccinations that vary by grade level. If you do not keep up on this, and have the records available, your child may not be able to start school on day 1.
- Establish Routines
- In order to prepare your child for the back to school sleep schedule, take at least a week prior to begin preparing them for this schedule. Reduce the amount of time spent on electronic devices and TV time and get them settled earlier if they have become accustomed to a later schedule during the summer months.
- Feed their bodies and fuel their brains
- Make certain that your child gets a healthy breakfast to help them be more alert and ready to learn. Also eating a healthy diet helps their immune systems be prepared to combat all those new germs that are inevitably introduced as they get back in the classroom.

Food for Thought



Favorite 20 Minute Coconut Macaroons

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups sweetened shredded coconut
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg well beaten
- 1 tsp almond extract

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.

Let the mixture stand for 5 minutes.

Grease a cookie sheet and place 1 tablespoon of the mix at a time shaping it into a round ball. Each macaroon should be about 1/2 inch apart.

Bake for 10 minutes or until slightly brown.

Let macaroons cool down on the cookie sheet before serving.

Enjoy!

Why did the student eat his homework?



Because the teacher told him it was a piece of cake!

Just for Giggles!

