



# Family Matters

*Making Family Life Easier*

## **Back to School**

For the last two weeks I have focused on the transition from primary to secondary school. However whenever any young person has a long break from school, it can seem like an uphill struggle to get them back into a school routine. They may be less than enthusiastic about going back to the books, their sleep schedule is most likely off and they would rather be spending their time hanging out with friends than sitting behind a desk. Even young people who are looking forward to returning to school and are capable and self-assured can approach a new school year with worries, especially those going into exam years; what if I don't measure up to what's expected of me academically, what if I disappoint parents, teachers and myself, what if there isn't enough time to get everything covered.

However being back at school doesn't have to be full of stresses and strains and there are ways of easing back into the school year.

Remind your child that school can be an enjoyable experience. Help them to focus on the good things about school, the things they most enjoy, even if it is only lunchtime and the bell signalling home time. As the year progresses, notice what subjects they are interested in or teachers they like and focus on them. Also encourage them to get involved in the social side of school by joining sports teams or clubs as this is a great way to have fun and make new friends.

A lack of sleep makes it difficult to concentrate and perform well in school. Studies suggest that teenagers need at least eight and a half hours sleep per night. Some of the following can help teenagers develop a healthy sleep pattern: going to bed at the same time every night and getting up at the same time every morning, relaxing before bedtime with music and turning off TV's and computers at least an hour before going to sleep.

Getting organised can help young people manage feelings of stress, especially for those in exam years. So begin by encouraging them to plan ahead, get them a personal planner so they can mark in important dates relating to exams, homework deadlines and other important times. Being prepared for exams starts with paying attention in school, understanding what is happening in class and staying up to date on subjects. Encourage your child to get help if they are struggling with schoolwork and to make the most of their school day by using any free time they may have to get a head start on homework and study.

Finally be compassionate, remember what it is like to go back to work after a nice relaxing holiday, it can be tough!

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