

8 Evidence-Based Tips to Help Kids Get Back in the School Routine



Tip #1:

Create a Schedule and Share It

- Talk with kids about what their routine will look like, including weekend and after-school activities, homework, and commute time.
- Create a colorful chart, calendar, or list.
- Post it somewhere visible, like the refrigerator or their bedroom door.



Tip #2:

Wake Up and Go to Bed at Set Times

- Before school starts, encourage kids to get to bed sooner at night and to set a morning alarm, too, to get used to the fall schedule.
- To make Monday mornings easier, support them to stick to a schedule on weekends, too, even if they go to bed and wake up an hour or so later.



Tip #3:

Limit Teens' Screen Time

- Have teens turn off all electronics for the hour before lights-out.
- Designate no-phone times, like meals or a family game night.



Tip #4:

Eat Regular Meals as a Family

- Block off time to connect as a family around the dinner table—it's proven to lower the risk of teen mental health issues while increasing their self-esteem and academic performance.



Tip #5:

Work Downtime into the Routine

- Kids could take one hour before homework to do whatever they want: take a walk, dance, draw, journal, read, listen to music, etc.
- They could reserve Friday afternoons for spontaneous non-required activities or relaxation.



Tip #6:

Make Sure There's Time to Move

- Set aside blocks of time for your child or your family to swim, play a sport, ride a bike, jump on a trampoline, or practice yoga. WHO guidelines recommend kids engage in physical activity at least three times a week.



Tip #7:

Help Kids Get Organized

- Use tools to help kids stay on track with studying and deadlines—a simple checklist or a more sophisticated time-management tool.
- Explore the possibility of a tutor or an academic coach.
- Support kids to organize their personal space; a messy room can make it harder to concentrate and may negatively affect mood.



Tip #8:

Practice Gratitude

- Families can benefit from taking a few moments each day to slow down and appreciate what's going well—it's proven to boost happiness and resilience.

Here's how to create a Family Gratitude Jar:



1. Decorate a jar with ribbons, glitter, stickers, and paint. Find a place to leave it in a common area of the house.
2. Cut up little slips of paper and put them in a small box next to the jar, with a few colorful markers for writing.
3. Invite every member of the family to reflect on what they're grateful for each day, write it down on a slip of paper, and drop it in the jar.
4. When the jar is full—or on a day you've previously decided on—sit together as a family, read each paper one by one, and savor the good memories of your experiences.