

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR

It may be hard to believe, but summer is almost over! Maybe that fact makes you want to burst into tears—alarm clocks, homework, and bus stops. Or maybe it makes you want to throw a huge party—no kids saying, “I’m bored!” or begging to go to the pool. Probably for most of us, it’s a mixture of both.

Either way, we want to help make the transition as smooth as possible for you and your family! Below is a checklist you can use as a guide to prepare for the coming school year.

ESTABLISH A SCHEDULE BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Waking up early after weeks of sleeping in is no fun for anyone. Before school starts, start waking up your family and sending them to bed at the same time you will during the school year. This will save a ton of yawns that first week back.

- CREATE A WEEKLY CHECK-IN.** Choose a time during the weekend to huddle around a calendar with your family. Maybe it’s Sunday night after dinner—everyone shares their plans for the week and discusses any changes from the regular routine. Who has practice? Who has carpool duty? Who has a doctor’s appointment?

- CREATE A RHYTHM OF TABLE CONVERSATION.** Try to eat dinner together as many times a week as possible. Establish a habit of asking each other, “What was the best part of your day?” and “What was your least favorite part?”

- CHOOSE A DESIGNATED SPACE FOR DAILY SUPPLIES.** Where will the book bags go? Shoes? Lunch boxes? Grab a few hooks and a couple of baskets and create a go-to spot for collecting items your kids will take with them every day. This will help you get out the door faster and eliminate the potential for frustration.

- SET UP A DISTRACTION-FREE HOMEWORK AREA.** Determine what the rules about homework are. Will you require your student to begin their homework immediately? Give them an hour of downtime? Allow them to wait until after dinner? Make a plan for whatever works best for your family. Then, create an area free of TVs, gaming systems, clutter, etc.

- TALK IT OUT.** Starting a new school year can give a kid of any age anxiety. Take your child out to lunch or dinner before the first day of school and talk about the upcoming year. Encourage them. Let them ask questions. Remind them of their wins last year, and discuss your expectations for the new school year. Make sure they know you’re praying for them.

- REACH OUT TO YOUR STUDENT’S TEACHER.** This is especially helpful for parents of younger students. Send in some supplies—tissues or markers or hand sanitizer—and attach a note that introduces you and your kid. Offer your help and encouragement. Ask them what their favorite treat is, and then surprise them with it a few times in the year.

- START EACH DAY RIGHT.** The best way to start your kid’s day of school is with some daily encouragement. Send them off to school with words that fill their heart.

- » “I’ve already been praying for you this morning.”
- » “You look beautiful/handsome/sharp this morning!”
- » “I love starting my day with you!”

- CREATE CLEAR PARAMETERS.** Be clear and consistent with the rules about homework and bedtimes and the consequences for not following them. Define a reward system, whether it’s extra screen time or a later curfew.

- PRAY, PRAY, PRAY.** Gather your family (and other families, if you want!) and pray for the new school year. Reassure your child that you’ll continue to pray for them as the upcoming year progresses.