

School, Supplies, Schedules and Sleep....

WHEN DID IT GET TO BE AUGUST? When did all the school supply sales start? How did the summer break slip away so quickly?

These are just a few of the sentiments you may be feeling as you look at the calendar and realize that depending on what part of the country you live in, the school year seems to be starting earlier and earlier. Across the country Catholic schools, public schools and private schools are opening anywhere from the last week of July through just after the Labor Day holiday in September. That means that parents need to start planning now on how to get their kids and their families back into the routine of school schedules and ready for a positive start to the 2019-2020 school year.

There are such a wide range of emotions for both parents and kids surrounding the start of a new school year - everything from relief to depression, fear to excitement, anxiety to the thrill of the unknown - and that applies to teachers also! But there are some great

strategies for families to use in getting their students ready for success and sharing a positive attitude about the return to school. NCEA would like to share some of these ideas with you for different age levels of students that may be anticipating the start of school just around the corner - kindergarten, elementary, middle school and high school.

These first three suggestions are common for every age group:

1. Two weeks before the start of school - begin to adjust sleep schedules to match what it will be once school starts.
2. Begin to disconnect electronic devices and set limits for online usage. Make sure phones are not in your students' bedrooms throughout the night. Charge them in your room or a central, open location.
3. Re-establish the home routine - times to check in with parents, food for snacks, location of book bags each evening, homework time and keeping track of the calendar of their events.



Kindergarten Students:

1. School supply list purchased together and set up a homework space for your newest student.
2. Shared reading routines and expectations can be set for evening shared time.
3. Visit the school and walk through the process of what the before and after school routine will be; how to ask to go to the bathroom and what to expect during the day from the teacher and classmates.

Elementary School

1. Create a homework/study space with their new school supplies.
2. Evening reading routine of favorite stories/authors based on your child's interests.
3. Re-establish house routines: where things go when you come home from school – paperwork that needs parent attention to a common location for backpacks and after school snacks.

Middle School

1. With your child, organize school supplies, a study space and talk about what goal or goals he or she might have set for this school year.
2. Check the uniform supplies and review the school dress code together.
3. Reacquaint family and students with the family activity calendar by setting up a once a week family meeting night to talk about the upcoming week of activities, commitments and events.

High School

1. Set goals for this school year (academic, activity and social) – how will you define success?
2. Re-establish house routines, rules and scheduling for family and kid's activities.
3. What academic/faith-based extras do you want to be part of your experience this year? Service hours, mission trips, college applications, college visits, extra-curricular events, internships – have you planned ahead for time, finances and academic impact?

These are what most experts consider the most important strategies to implement for a smooth start to the new school year. There are three faith foundational concepts to also consider for this school year: praying together as a family and Mass attendance, sharing your love, pride and dreams for your students and being positive about their school opportunities and experiences. With a little planning prior to the first day, it could create a great start to an exciting new school year – although some tweaks to the family schedule and re-establishing school routines should be a conscious effort before the first day sneaks up on you.

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