

July-August 2009

Back-to-School Tips For a Better Start to the School Year

It may still be summer, but school will be back in session before you know it! Did you know that your child might be heading back to school at an academic disadvantage? It's true; over the summer, students' learning momentum can drop off, which means that it can take up to two months for students to get back into the groove of learning.

Two months is a long time to be simply re-adjusting to the classroom setting, especially since other students are prepared to learn from the moment they return to the classroom.

You can help your child beat the summer brain drain and **start the new school year on a high note** with a few small tweaks to your family's summer routine and help from Oxford Learning.

The back-to-school countdown has already begun! Oxford Learning helps students and families beat the brain drain and have a successful transition back to the classroom with these **Countdown Tips for Back To School**.

Five Tips For A Successful Back-To-School Season!

1. Start watching the clock. Time has a way of slipping away during the summer, especially where sleep is concerned. It can seem less important to enforce that 8 o'clock bedtime when there isn't any place to be in the morning. The problem is that sleeping in or staying up just a little bit later can wreak havoc on sleeping patterns, throwing a wrench into the gears when it's time to follow a stricter sleep schedule. Sticking to set bedtimes and morning wakeup times keep a child's sleeping habits routine, and means less disruptions when summer time becomes school time.

Tip: Use an alarm clock, even in the summer. If your child has never had an alarm clock before, summer is a great time to introduce one. Putting an alarm clock in your child's bedroom can help develop time management skills.

2. Eat regular meals, regularly. Mealtimes are among the primary markers that divide up the day, both at home and at school. During the school year, eating a healthy breakfast in the morning requires a reliable routine. Why let that routine slip just because school is out? Kids still need the energy that breakfast supplies to be mentally alert, even during playtime. Growing bodies can become dependent on a set meal schedule during the school year and it's important to maintain set meal times to keep brains functioning optimally. Regular meal times mean that when students head back to school in the fall, they are focused on the teacher, not on their growling bellies.

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3. Get supplies ready the night before. Getting ready for school in the morning can turn your normally happy house into a mad house. There are usually lots of last-minute scrambles to find the needed supplies. From binders to running shoes to lunch bags, locating a needed item when there's a time crunch can be a source of stress. Families can practice refining their morning routine by organizing the night before. Whether it's the summer or school year, picking out clothing, preparing lunches, or bringing sports equipment and supplies to the front door the night before makes morning routines run much smoother.

4. Use a calendar or an agenda. Throughout the school year, students use an agenda to stay on top of homework and assignments. But using an agenda or wall calendar to keep track of activities is just as beneficial in the summer, especially since the days have a tendency to blend into one another. Keeping track of play dates, swimming lessons, camp schedules, or picnics ensures that no important summer activity is forgotten and keeps children in the habit of organizing their time—a must-have skill for the return to the classroom.

5. Read everyday. One of the simplest (and most enjoyable) ways to keep the brain active all summer and to prevent losing summer learning momentum is to read everyday. Whether it's comic books, magazines, or novels, reading everyday helps to maintain active learning and prepares young minds for back-to-school.