



SEALS Health News

VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

Aug/Sept 2022

CDC Health Suggestions for Back-to-School Success

Research shows healthy students are better learners

To have a great school year, kids need to stay healthy. Healthy students are better learners. CDC has tips and resources for parents and schools to help children and teens get fit and stay healthy whether they're just starting kindergarten or heading off to high school.

Wash your hands

Germs are everywhere. Touch a surface where germs are lurking, then touch your face, and you can get sick.

It doesn't have to be that way. Handwashing with soap and water is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of colds, flu, and other diseases to others.

Eat well, be active, and get enough sleep.

Make sure children drink plenty of water, limit sugary drinks, and practice healthy eating at home and school to help achieve and maintain a healthy weight and to support brain development and healthy growth. It's also important to help kids get the recommended 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, as well as the right amount of sleep every night. Teens need at least 8 hours of sleep per night—
younger students need at least 9 hours.

Stay home if you are sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive, stay home and away from others (isolate). Call your school nurse.



Routine vaccinations save lives.

Getting required vaccines can help protect children and teens as they grow into adulthood. Making sure children get vaccinated is one of the most important things parents can do.

Stay cool in the heat.

With above average temperatures in multiple parts of the country, it is important to limit outdoor activity during the middle of the day when the sun is hottest. Wear and reapply sunscreen, seek shade, drink plenty of water, and know how to prevent heat-related illness in athletes.



(FOR PARENTS)

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Top 10 List (Mental Health Edition)

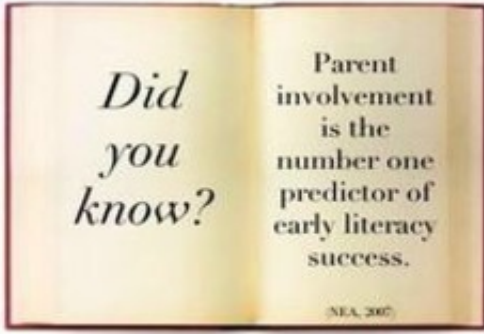
- 1 Remind your child that they're not alone.** Nearly everyone feels behind in school this year. Hang in there and just do your best!
- 2 Help your child know what to expect.** Find out the school's policies this year. What's different about lockers, classrooms, lunch or anything else?
- 3 Praise all your child's efforts!** Life's more than grades. Recognize their curiosity, kindness and bravery.
- 4 Pay attention to your own anxiety.** Kids can sense anxiety. Talk to other adults to ease worry and get professional help if you need it.
- 5 Get enough sleep.** Preschoolers need 11-12 hours, school-aged kids need 10 hours and teens need 9-10 hours.
- 6 Schedule quality time together.** Just 1 hour makes a difference. Here's a topic of conversation: What are you most excited about this year?
- 7 Encourage daily movement.** Children need 1 hour of physical activity a day — riding a bike, a dance party or whatever gets them moving.
- 8 Keep a routine.** Waking up and going to bed at the same time every day improves mental health. (This goes for adults too!)
- 9 Identify ways to calm stress.** Taking deep breaths or holding something comforting in your hand (like a smooth rock) quietly relieve stress.
- 10 Just ask!** Ask your child if they're worried about being back in the classroom. Be a good listener and support them.



Integral Care .org

Concerned about your child? Talk to their school counselor. Or call our 24/7 Helpline at **512-472-HELP (4357)** for free emotional support day or night. Press 1, then 1.

Back to School: Parent Involvement is Key



The school year brings opportunities for social connection. Learn how you can work to create a healthy and supportive school for your child.

Parent engagement is a key component of making schools a healthy and supportive place. It is a shared responsibility of both school staff and families:

School staff are committed to making families feel welcomed and engaged in a variety of ways to maintain their involvement, such as through emails, phone calls, or meetings to discuss grades, behavior, and accomplishments. Families are committed to actively supporting their child's learning and development.

What parents can do:

- Become part of the decision-making process in schools.
- Ask the school to provide educational opportunities for parents.
- Talk with your children about health-related behaviors.
- Set goals with your child's school or teacher for building strong, positive relationships with peers and adults who can support their emotional well-being.

Back-to-school season is an ideal time for parents to reinforce behaviors that help reduce the effects of stressful life events and teach children the skills to overcome them so they can reach their full potential.



Get involved! When parents are engaged in their children's school activities, they get better grades, choose healthier behaviors, and have better social skills.

Back-to-School Tips

Make the first day easier

Remember that you don't need to wait until the first day of class to ask for help. Schools are open to address any concerns a parent or child might have, including the specific needs of a child, over the summer. The best time to get help might be one to two weeks before school opens.

Many children get nervous about new situations, including changing to a new school, classroom or teacher. This may happen at any age. If your child seems nervous, it can be helpful to rehearse heading into the new situation. Take them to visit the new school or classroom before the first day of school. Remind them that there are probably a lot of students who are uneasy about the first day of school. Teachers know that students are nervous and will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible. If your child seems nervous, ask them what they are worried about and help them problem-solve ways to master the new situation.

Point out the positive aspects of starting school to help your kids look forward to the first day of class. Talk about how they will see old friends and meet new ones, for example.

Find another child in the neighborhood you child can walk to school or ride with on the bus.

If it is a new school for your child, attend any available orientations and take an opportunity to tour the school before the first day. Bring your child to school a few days prior to class to play on the playground and get comfortable in the new environment.

If you feel it is needed, drive your child (or walk with them) to school and pick them up on the first day. Get there early on the first day to cut down on unnecessary stress.

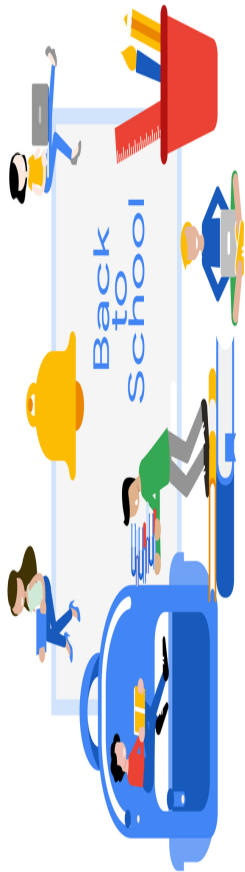
Consider starting your child on their school sleep/wake schedule a week or so ahead of time so that time change is not a factor on their first couple of days at school.

Backpack safety



Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.

- Organize your child's backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10% to 20% of your child's body weight. Go through the pack with your child weekly, and remove unneeded items to keep it light.
- Remind your child to always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
- Adjust the pack so that the bottom sits at your child's waist.
- If your school allows, consider a rolling backpack. This type of backpack may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs, they may be difficult to roll in snow, and they may not fit in some lockers. And review backpack safety with your child.



Traveling to and from School



School bus

Children should always board and exit the bus at locations that provide safe access to the bus or to the school building.

Remind your child to wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.

Make sure your child walks where she can see the bus driver (which means the driver will be able to see them, too).

Remind your student to look both ways to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street, just in case somebody does not stop as required. Encourage your child to actually practice how to cross the street several times before the first day of school.

Bike

Practice the bike route to school before the first day of school to make sure your child can manage it.

Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride.

Ride on the right, in the same direction as auto traffic and ride in bike lanes if they are present.

Use appropriate hand signals.

Respect traffic lights and stop signs.

Wear bright-colored clothing to increase visibility. White or light-colored clothing and reflective gear is especially important after dark.

Know the "rules of the road."

Walking to school

Children are generally ready to start walking to school at 9 to 11 years of age.

Make sure your child's walk to school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.

Identify other children in the neighborhood with whom your child can walk to school. In neighborhoods with higher levels of traffic, consider organizing a "walking school bus," in which an adult accompanies a group of neighborhood children walking to school.

Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision. If the route home requires crossing busier streets than your child can reasonably do safely, have an adult, older friend or sibling escort them home.

Bright-colored clothing or a visibility device, like a vest or armband with reflectors, will make your child more visible to drivers.



Car

All passengers should wear a seat belt or use an age- and size-appropriate car seat or booster seat.

Keep your child riding in a car seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a booster seat when they have reached the top weight or height allowed for their seat, their shoulders are above the top harness slots, or her ears have reached the top of the seat.

Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age). This means that your child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with their legs bent at the knees and feet hanging down and the shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat; the lap belt is low and snug across the thighs, not the stomach.

All children younger than 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles. If you must drive more children than can fit in the rear seat (when carpooling, for example), move the front-seat passenger's seat as far back as possible and have the child ride in a booster seat if the seat belts do not fit properly without it.

Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. Remind your teen to wear their seat belt, limit the number of teen passengers, and do not allow eating, drinking, cell phone conversations (even when using hands-free devices or speakerphone), texting or other mobile device use to prevent driver distraction.

Selinsgrove Area School District



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Information brought to you by:
CDC HHS , NIH; Healthykids.org



Eating during the school day

Studies show that children who eat a nutritious breakfast function better. They do better in school, and have better concentration and more energy. Some schools provide breakfast for children; if yours does not, make sure they eat a breakfast that contains some protein.

- Most schools regularly send schedules of cafeteria menus home and/or have them posted on the school's website. With this advance information, you can plan on packing lunch on the days when the main course is one your child prefers not to eat.
- Many children qualify for free or reduced price food at school, including breakfast. The forms for these services can be completed at the school office. Hunger will affect a child's performance in class.

Look into what is offered inside and outside of the cafeteria, including vending machines, a la carte, school stores, snack carts and fundraisers held during the school day. All foods sold during the school day must meet nutrition standards established by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). There are healthy choices such as fresh fruit, low-fat dairy products, water and 100% fruit juice. Learn about the school's wellness policy and get involved.. Also, consider nutrition choices if your child will be bringing food to eat during school.

- Each 12-ounce soft drink contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Drinking just one can of soda a day increases a child's risk of obesity by 60%. Choose healthier options (such as water and low-fat dairy products) to send in your child's lunch.

