Visit our newly Redesigned Website!!!!

Its user-friendly....

Contains helpful links to support our families....

Informative....

We welcome your feedback...

www.hsao.info
Help Your Child Prepare for Back to School

When summer winds down, it's time to get ready for a new school year. Buying notebooks and scoping out sales is the easy part. There are less tangible things you can do as well.

Here are 9 ways you can help your child -- and yourself -- get ready to go back to school.

1. Re-Establish School Routines

Use the last few weeks of summer to get into a school-day rhythm. "Have your child practice getting up and getting dressed at the same time every morning," suggests school psychologist Kelly Vaillancourt, MA, CAS. Start eating breakfast, lunch, and snacks around the times your child will eat when school is in session.

It's also important to get your child used to leaving the house in the morning, so plan morning activities outside the house in the week or two before school. That can be a challenge for working parents, says Vaillancourt, who is the director of government relations for the National Association of School Psychologists. But when the school rush comes, hustling your child out the door will be less painful if she has broken summer habits like relaxing in her PJs after breakfast.

2. Nurture Independence

Once the classroom door shuts, your child will need to manage a lot of things on his own. Get him ready for independence by talking ahead of time about responsibilities he's old enough to shoulder. This might include organizing his school materials, writing down assignments, and bringing home homework, says Nicole Pfleger, school counselor at Nickajack Elementary School in Smyrna, GA.

Even if your child is young, you can install skills that will build confidence and independence at school. Have your young child practice writing her name and tying her own shoes. "The transition to school will be easier for everyone if your child can manage basic needs without relying on an adult," Pfleger says.
3. Create a Launch Pad

"Parents and teachers should do whatever they can to facilitate a child being responsible," says Pfleger, who was named School Counselor of the Year by the American School Counselor Association in 2012. At home, you can designate a spot where school things like backpacks and lunch boxes always go to avoid last-minute scrambles in the morning. You might also have your child make a list of things to bring to school and post it by the front door.

4. Set Up a Time and Place for Homework

Head off daily battles by making homework part of your child’s everyday routine. Establish a time and a place for studying at home. "Even if it’s the kitchen table, it really helps if kids know that’s where they sit down and do homework, and that it happens at the same time every day," says Pfleger. As much as possible, plan to make yourself available during homework time especially with younger kids. You might be reading the paper or cooking dinner, but be around to check in on your child’s progress.

5. After-School Plans

School gets out before most working parents get home, so it’s important to figure out where your children will go, or who will be at home, in the afternoons. You might find an after-school program through the school itself, a local YMCA, or a Boys and Girls Club. If possible, try to arrange your schedule so you can be there when your child gets home during those first few days of school. It may help your child adjust to the new schedule and teachers.
6. Make a Sick-Day Game Plan
Working parents also know the trials and tribulations of getting a call from the school nurse when they can't get away from the office. "Most of our parents, because of the economy, are working," says Pfleger. Before school begins, line up a trusted babysitter or group of parents that can pinch hit for each other when children get sick. And make sure you know the school’s policy. You may have to sign forms ahead of time listing people who have your permission to pick up your child.

7. Attend Orientations to Meet and Greet
Schools typically hold orientation and information sessions before the start of each academic year. These are good opportunities for you to meet the key players: your child's teachers, school counselors, the principle, and most importantly, front desk staff. "The secretaries know everything and are the first people children see when they arrive at school every day," says Vaillancourt.

8. Talk to the Teachers
Of course, teachers are the reason your child is there. When you talk to your child’s teachers, ask about their approach to homework. Some teachers assign homework so kids can practice new skills while others focus on the accuracy of the assignments they turn in. Ask for the dates of tests and large assignments so you can help your child plan accordingly. For instance, if you know a big test is coming up on Friday morning, you will know to keep things simple on Thursday evening.

9. Make it a Family Affair
Together, you and your child can plan for success in school. For instance, sit down with your child to create a routine chart. Ask your child what she wants to do first when she first gets home from school: play outside or do homework? Her answers go on the chart. "The more kids have ownership in creating a routine for themselves and setting expectations, the more likely they are to follow it," says Vaillancourt.
Transition Plan: From Summer to Back-to-School

1. Preparation
- Define with ending and what’s beginning
- Decide the difference between summer and school
- List what’s important for school
- List things that made summer fun

2. Summer with the Start of School
- Summer with the Start of School

3. Choosing Extra-Curricular Activities
- Time Management
- Prioritization
- Decision Making
- Manage Resources
- Make a home for the system to store class papers, notes, and recalls
- Plan
- Lunch
- Dinner
- Snack
- Eat school meals and supplies
- Determine which items to purchase according to categories

4. Managing the School Year (First Few Weeks)
- Task Analysis
- Clear Sorting
- Time Management
- Materials Management
- Organize back pack, study area, and school materials
- Set aside enough time each night for homework and study
- Set goals for the beginning of the school year (academic, social, and family)

What To Do

Executive Function Area

Steps in Chronological Order
I need to…

How did I do???

I will earn _______________ if I do a good job ______ days during the week!!

Great Job!!! You earned your _____________!

THINGS I NEED TO WORK ON!!

I need to work on….
Vaccines (shots) help prevent dangerous and sometimes deadly diseases. National Immunization Awareness Month is the perfect time to promote vaccines and remind family, friends, and co-workers to get caught up on their shots.

Like seatbelts, bike helmets, life jackets, and car seats; immunizations have the power to protect! Vaccines work with the body to help protect against disease, and immunization strengthens what our bodies do naturally to keep us healthy!

The Allegheny County Immunization Coalition is a growing coalition of physicians, pharmacists, teachers, human services workers and community members interested in promoting immunizations for healthy communities.

Shots can prevent serious diseases like measles, diphtheria, and rubella. It’s important to know which shots you need and when to get them.

- Everyone age 6 months and older needs a seasonal flu shot every year. Other shots work best when they are given at certain ages.
- If you have a child age 6 or younger, find out which shots your child needs.
- Find out which shots you or your teenager needs.
- All adults need a booster shot every 10 years to help protect against tetanus and diphtheria.

Talk to your doctor or nurse to make sure that everyone in the family gets the shots they need. For more information, Visit the CDC’s... Vaccines & Immunizations website for answers to Common Questions about Immunizations as well as the most current information on Immunization Schedules.
International Youth Day was created by the United Nations and first celebrated in 1998. The event is now marked on 12 August each year, the day aims to celebrate the contribution youths make to society.

Young people have led the world in encouraging recycling and green lifestyles and the use of new technology like mobile phones, ipods and social networking sites like Facebook.

Each year a theme is selected for the day and this year it is 'Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward'. You can keep checking back on the International Youth Day website for more information. And, what's more a commemoration of the day is held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Youths across the world are encouraged to send a description of any planned activities to youth@un.org and a selection of the most creative events are featured on the UN website to give a flavor of what is happening across the world to celebrate this special day.

There will be a huge range of events taking place across the world! There will be photography exhibits and competitions at the UN headquarters in New York showing how our world youth experience economic, environmental and social life. There will also be a showcase of youth talent, showing how young people think these problems should be tackled.

If you fancy organizing your own event, planning a youth performance or lobbying Government about the World Program of Action For Youth. Lots more information about how you can get involved can be found at the United Nations website.

So ... get involved and have a say in your future!
August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

August is the month for basic healthcare services such as immunizations, dental cleanings, a physical and eye exam. In fact, children younger than school age can benefit from such services.

**Ages Zero to Five**

Proper vision screenings and examinations are essential for early detection and intervention of vision problems in children. Newborns should have their eyes checked before leaving the hospital. The examination in the nursery is for general eye health and includes a red reflex test. The exam can help detect several congenital eye problems, some of which may lead to blindness.

During well baby exams from birth to 2 years of age, your child’s pediatrician will use history and a vision evaluation to determine if vision problems exist. From ages 3 to 10, well child exams should include vision screenings to assess visual acuity and ocular alignment.

If there is ever a concern during a vision screening, your child should be referred for a comprehensive eye examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. The American Optometric Association recommends that in addition to screenings offered by primary care physicians, comprehensive eye examinations should be scheduled for ages 6 months, 3 years and 5 years for all children, regardless of vision concerns.

**School-age Children**

Vision can change frequently during the school years, hence the importance of the annual eye exam. More than 80 percent of early learning is visual. If your child is not performing well in school, don’t attribute it to lack of interest or laziness. In some instances, the problem could be vision related. The American Optometric Association (AOA) indicates the most common vision problem is nearsightedness or myopia. However, some children have other forms of refractive error like farsightedness and astigmatism. In addition, the existence of eye focusing, eye tracking and eye coordination problems may affect school performance.

Simply put, children have a hard time concentrating if they are unable to see well enough to follow along. And when children don’t comprehend that their inability to process information or see the chalkboard is related to their vision, they may develop poor self esteem, become frustrated with formalized education or act out. According to the AOA, many children are mislabeled as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) when, in reality, they actually have an undiagnosed vision problem.
Vision is an integral part of learning and early intervention is the key to ensuring lifelong independence. An undetected visual impairment at an early age can set a child back years in development in just a few short months.

Without good vision, a child’s ability to learn and comprehend the world around them suffers. Since many vision impairments begin at an early age, proper care and early detection is key to ensuring a lifetime of success and independence for children.

Ensure early detection by scheduling an annual eye exam. If you notice the following problems with your child between appointments, see your regular eye doctor right away.

- Frequent eye rubbing or blinking
- Frequent headaches
- Covering one eye
- Short attention span
- Avoiding reading assignments or holding reading materials close to the face
- An eye turning in or out
- Seeing double
- Losing his or her place when reading
- Difficulty with reading retention

Understanding Your Child’s Vision

The following information from the AOA and Prevent Blindness America detail the changes in vision that occur throughout childhood.

Newborns

Infants are not born with fully developed visual acuity. Newborns respond best to objects that are approximately one foot away, and are attracted brightly colored, or high-contrast, objects. They typically have a 90 degree field of vision.

3 Months

By three months of age, babies develop coordination between both eyes. This allows them to perceive depth and learn about spatial relationships. Most infants can track moving objects. Colors, details and mobiles in motion fascinate babies this age and aid in visual development. They will begin to reach for toys in their field of vision.

3 to 6 Months

When a baby is three to six months of age, the retina in the eye is well developed and the infant’s visual acuity has improved enough to allow small details to be seen. Depth perception is also developing.

6 Months

At six months of age, an infant’s eye is about two thirds the size of an adult eye. By this age, both eyes are working together and depth perception is continuing to improve.
1 Year Old
By the age of one, hand-eye coordination is practiced by children and can be enhanced by games involving pointing, grasping, tossing, placing and catching.

2 to 5 Years Old
A preschooler is typically eager to draw and look at pictures. Stories connected to images can help the child become engaged and helps coordinate vision and hearing.

Five Plus
Keep in mind that as your child progresses through school, the print in his or her textbook will decrease in size. Also, they may need to begin utilizing the chalkboard or a computer monitor for some assignments.

Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month

Common Eye Myths

More than 12.1 million school-age children, or one in four, has a vision impairment. Among preschool-age children, more than one in 20 has a vision problem that can cause permanent sight loss if left untreated. The most common types of eye problems seen in children are:

- Myopia (nearsightedness)
- Strabismus (crossed eyes)
- Amblyopia (lazy eye)

The most common causes of blindness among children are: congenital cataracts, retinopathy of prematurity and other complications caused by premature births.

Hospital emergency rooms treat thousands of children each year who suffer from eye injuries in and around the home. In general, the most common causes of eye injuries to children age 14 and younger are caused by:

If you have any questions and / or need assistance regarding the coordination of health and wellness services for child, please feel free to contact your HSAO Service Coordinator at 412-884-4500.