



Getting Ready for Back to School

The first day of school is exciting and fun, but for parents it can also be a little scary. As parents, we have shielded and protected our kids from any and all potential dangers. Since the day we brought them home from the hospital, we made sure our little buddies used the car seat each every time! We have destroyed entire armies of germs with our insistence on hand washing before eating. We have even made our little angels wait the mysterious 30 minutes before swimming after a meal for no other reason than that's what our parents made us do. This occurs even though it has never been scientifically proven and none of us have ever actually seen anyone cramp up and sink by jumping in the pool 29 minutes after eating. But now we face our most formidable foe yet....THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!!! (Cue dramatic music). Rest assured my fellow parents, with knowledge and a little bit of planning ahead; we can all ensure that the new school year starts off great!

BACKPACKS

Make sure the back pack is appropriately sized for your child. Giving your first grader a bag designed for a high school student may end up weighing more than your child weighs. Take your kids to the store to try on a few different back packs. If they put one on and the only thing you can see from behind is the back pack and feet, then it is probably too big. On the other hand, if you can see their head and bottom, it is probably ok. Buy a pack that has 2 wide padded shoulder straps. The single shoulder bags are more strenuous on back muscles. Pack light with heavier items closer to the body. Consider wheeled back packs for older students who need to carry a lot of books throughout the day. It is a good idea to clean out the bag often in order to prevent carrying unnecessary excessive weight. Use the compartments for the little things that you may want to retrieve quickly or often. This is a great place for the sanitary hand wash bottle or wipes.

SHOTS AND PHYSICALS

Your child's school is required to ensure the safety of all children by verifying that they have received all appropriate immunizations and required exams prior to letting them start school. There are no exceptions. Plan ahead and beat the rush. We have all seen (or been) the parent desperately trying to find their pediatrician's office or an open acute care clinic the night before school starts. Having your child receive their immunizations at least a week or two before school starts allows your child to recover from any side effects or soreness before the first day of school.

All sports physicals must be completed prior to participating in athletics. Several sports, to include football, start on or even sometimes before the first day of school. Plan ahead, so you can ensure full participation from the start.

ATHLETICS AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

The fall semester may be upon us, but we are still in the dog days of summer. August is the hottest time of the year in Texas. Kids who spent the majority of their summer on the couch in the living room are at the highest risk for heat related injuries when starting athletics. Get your kids outside to do some mild exercises and running a couple of weeks before school starts. This will help them to get acclimated to the summer heat. Ensure they drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration.

ALLERGIES

Make sure that the teacher, nurse and cafeteria staff is made aware of your child's food allergies. Most schools have made special seating arrangements in the cafeteria for children with severe allergies such as peanuts. This will ensure your child's safety and minimize potential for cross contamination from foods of non-allergic kids. This is also a good time to ensure that their Epi-pen prescriptions are up to date. Also, make sure you get the correct form from the school nurse to ensure your child can receive any medications they may require during school hours.

By planning ahead and using these few tips, your child will enjoy a great and safe start to the new school year.

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