



## Start Smart: Top Tips For Parents This School Year

(NAPSA)—Whether you're a newbie sending your kids to kindergarten or a grizzled veteran parent of a high school senior, school season can be an emotional time. Here's a quick list of things you can do for more stress-free days at school.

### 10. Plan Lunches

If you are buying school lunch, check the online menu to see what they're serving. If you're making lunch, have your kids help you plan a few in advance—they'll like what they're eating and feel involved in the process.

### 9. Watch for Bullying

Many kids don't want to admit they're being bullied, so parents have to ask the right questions. Asking "How was your day?" usually elicits the "Fine" default response. Instead, ask questions like "Whom did you sit next to at lunch today?" Specific questions require more detailed answers, which gives you a clearer idea of how they are faring.

### 8. Visit Your School/Teacher

Most schools have a "Back to School Night" for students and parents in the first weeks of school. If not, call the school and set something up.

### 7. Hand Washing Is Key

The good news—your kids will be drinking from the cup of knowledge. The bad news? All the other kids are drinking from the same cup. Your best defense? Teach your kids to wash their hands frequently and cough into their elbows instead of their hands.

### 6. Find at Least One Friend in Class

Just about everyone has Facebook, so use it during the first few weeks of school to ask other parents who have a child in the same grade which class their son or daughter is attending. This will alleviate the stress your child feels by not knowing anyone.

### 5. Create a Checklist

Organization is a challenge, especially in the morning. Create a checklist of items (lunch, back-



**It's wise to learn in advance what supplies your children need for school and then stock up.**

pack, books, homework) and place it by the door; you and your child will be less likely to forget things.

### 4. Buy the Right School Supplies

Most schools send precise lists of what kids need for each new grade level. If you don't have this list, ask the teacher. Bonus tip—buy some extra supplies on the list for the classroom. Many teachers spend their own money on school supplies, so they GREATLY appreciate when parents ease their burden with donated items.

### 3. Get Into a Routine

Set a specific bedtime, eat breakfast early and get your children dressed in a fixed amount of time—they'll be calm and on time for school.

### 2. Set the Tone

It is understandable for parents to be stressed about school. But while it's perfectly natural to be upset, try not to let your kids see your angst. They take their cues from you, so if you're emotional and anxious about the start of school, they'll follow suit. You can cry after they get on the bus, which brings us to...

### 1. Get a Box of Tissues

If your child is young, you might need tissues after shedding tears about how fast he or she grew up. Parents of that second child might be using the tissues to dry their tears of joy at the thought of having a little bit of free time during the day.

For more school year tips, visit [www.follett.com/back-to-school](http://www.follett.com/back-to-school).