

# BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS



## Elementary School

## High School

### School Supplies

Check to see what supplies you still have available from last year. Check the dollar store for bargains or take advantage of back-to-school sales. Use a checklist to avoid duplication.

Check to see what supplies are usable from last year, work out a budget and then let teens buy their own supplies. Buy supplies just before school starts, to take advantage of back-to-school sales. Use a supply checklist and don't forget to get lock for their lockers.

### Bedtime

About a week before the beginning of school, start a routine where children are going to bed earlier, especially if they have been staying up later over the summer holidays.

Establish acceptable hours for school nights that you can both live with. Despite what teens think, they do need a good night's sleep.

### Healthy Living

Children need good food, daily physical activity and a healthy environment that supports learning and growth. Through Healthy Schools initiatives, such as 20 minutes of daily physical activity and having healthy food in vending machines, the Ontario government is working with schools to ensure kids maximize their potential. Look for crunchy fruits and vegetables and low-fat food choices to tuck into lunch boxes and enjoy family walks, biking or hikes so everyone gets exercise.

Buy a variety of healthy food choices and ask your teens what they want to eat, so that lunches are enjoyable and nutritious. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so encourage teens to take time to eat in the morning. And remind them that daily physical activity is an important way to maintain their ideal weight and have a positive body image. A family run is a great way to spend quality time together and burn calories.

### School Year Priorities

Figure out the ground rules for after-school activities, chores, homework, television and Internet use. By discussing priorities early, you can set a schedule and avoid confrontations later on.

Set priorities for after-school activities, job and chore hours, homework and leisure time. Encourage your teen to stick with the list, and revise it if priorities change.

### Homework

Set up a well-lit, quiet place with a good work surface for your child to do homework. Encourage a regular homework time and discourage distractions.

Encourage a regular homework time with limited distractions. Establish appropriate times for phone calls, instant messaging, electronic games and other activities.

### Bullying

Bullying is a serious problem, can be verbal, social, physical and electronic and needs to be dealt with promptly through dialogue. As well, children can speak directly with Kids Help Phone. The Ontario government recently provided funding to the helpline so additional counsellors are available to help with bullying problems. The government will also be producing a booklet on dealing with bullying that you can order from [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).

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### Learning at Home

Parents can support the government's literacy and numeracy programs by incorporating learning into everyday life - for example, by having kids read package labels and weigh produce during grocery shopping trips. Reading to your child for just 20 minutes a day can amount to more than 1,420 hours by age 12.

Encourage reading for pleasure in the home and provide a variety of reading materials, from novels to magazines, you know your teens will enjoy. Your local library is a great place to start.