



2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

OHIO COALITION FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



www.ocecd.org
844-382-5452



The information provided in this newsletter is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered as legal advice.

Back To School Tips



FOR PARENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

The last few days of summer are upon us! To help parents, especially those of children with disabilities, OCECD has compiled tips to keep in mind as summer winds down and the school year begins. This newsletter will provide ideas and tips for transitioning out of the vacation mindset and back into study mode and getting the new year off to a positive running start.



TIPS FOR ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD

Studies show that parental involvement and communicating directly with their children's schools is one of the key factors in students' success.

- Over the years, we have found it helpful for parents to give teachers some background information about their child, in addition to the child's school and special education IEP file. Preferably, give this to the teacher before the first day of school.
- Create a "cheat sheet" about your child that will serve as a quick resource for important information about your child. It can include a photo of your child, with full name and birthday, nick name, emergency contact information, hobbies, strengths, and areas that need developing. Use positive terminology, such as "working on tying shoes," rather than "can't tie shoes." Include a reference to your child's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- These are two sample ideas from ADDitude magazine.

[Let-Me-Introduce-Myself.pdf \(additudemag.com\)](#)

[Get-to-Know-My-Child.pdf \(additudemag.com\)](#)

The more your child knows about what's coming next, the better prepared they will be for the new school year.

- If possible, schedule a walk-through of your child's day with them during Open House, so they have an idea of where they will be going, what they will be doing, who their new teacher will be, when they will eat lunch, and so forth.
- Create a daily schedule and calendar.
- If the teacher has a class list, point out names of friends.
- It is important to recognize the serious nature of bullying and acknowledge your child's feelings about being bullied. Teach your child to be comfortable with when and how to ask a trusted adult for help. Ask them to identify who they can ask for help.



TIPS FOR GETTING READY FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Most schools will send a list of supplies to buy. Many community charities have give-away days for school supplies. For high school students, it might be a good idea to have your teen talk with an upperclassman about school supplies. They may even sell their used study materials.
- Organize all paperwork and documentation. Set up a 3-ring binder or folder to keep your child's special education documents, meetings notices, IEPs, and ETRs in sequential order. The same holds true for students with Section 504 Plans. Gather any reports from outside agencies, therapists, tutors, counselors, or doctors all in one place.
- Check in with your child's team. Double check that all supports and accommodations are ready to go.
- Parent-teacher conferences may be conducted virtually. Be sure you know what meeting platform your school uses.
- Read the Student Code of Conduct handbook. Be sure to also read this handbook with your child, explaining to your child in terms that they understand as you read through it.
- Set up a Communication Log in a notebook to keep track of all phone calls, emails, notes home, notes to teachers, meetings, and conferences. Be sure to note date, time, and topic.
- Jot down any passwords needed for communication portals you will need to use to communicate with your child's teacher or school.
- Review your school's curriculum.

- List any assistive technology that may improve your child's educational outcomes, such as Learning Ally, calculator, speech to text, text to speech, communication devices, etc. Email your child's IEP team to discuss options.
- Determine if you want to meet with the school psychologist before the meeting to review ETR assessments. [Slide 1 \(ocecd.org\)](#). *Understanding the Evaluation Process under IDEA 2004* by OCECD
- Review your child's current IEP and most recent Progress Reports. If the IEP no longer meets their needs, schedule a meeting with faculty and staff to go over their IEP or 504 Plan. Parents have rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides Section 504 Plan accommodations for general education students with disabilities that do not require specially designed instruction.

More details are included in the OCECD publication, *What is an IEP?*

- [YOU AND THE IEP \(eschoolview.com\)](#)
- [Parent's Rights in the Special Education Process by OCECD](#)
- [Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
- Review the results of beginning of year assessments and where your child finished last year to check for any significant regression.
- If inappropriate classroom behavior has been an issue in the past, schedule a meeting with teachers and appropriate school administration to discuss Positive Behavior strategies [PBIS], update a Behavior Intervention Plan [BIP] to include any new staff that will be gathering data, and/or request a Functional Behavior Assessment [FBA] before behavior escalates to requiring disciplinary action due to Code of Conduct violations.
- Daily report cards or weekly reports have proven to be successful; talk with your teacher about implementing this strategy.

[The Daily report card](#)

[Weekly monitoring report](#)



TIPS TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AHEAD OF TIME

Here are a few of the challenges you might tackle in the summer, rather than waiting until the first day of school. Taken from [Weekly monitoring report.pdf](#)

- **Gym clothes and lockers:** If the school requires gym clothes and shoes to be left in lockers at school, be sure your child can operate the locks, tie the sneakers, and manage using a gym locker. Alternatives would be providing their own lock or unlocked cubby, Velcro sneakers, and pull-on gym shorts without draw strings, etc.
 - **Computer-based assignments:** Today's teachers provide homework assignments, instruction, tests, and even grades via computer. They may use ClassDojo, Google Drive, or a school developed software. If your child has a hard time knowing how to access a password, get online, and save their work, you will need to familiarize yourself with the system in order to help them. Strategies like practicing or writing steps down may help increase independence as well. Connect with your child's teacher about additional possible solutions to assist with your child's success.
 - **Map out how they will get to and from school.** Do a couple of test runs. They can even write their own social story on "How to Get to School." If they cannot write, they can draw pictures. Practicing going to and from school will ease a child's anxiety.
-



TIPS FOR ADDRESSING STUDENT MEDICAL NEEDS

There is more to starting school than school supplies. Children with disabilities are more likely to have additional health issues. As a result, they may visit the school nurse's office more than other students.

- Medical Authorization Forms may need to be submitted to the school nurse, especially for any food allergies or medical needs.
 - Get acquainted with the school nurse and let her know how best to support your child. Introduce your child to her before there is a medical emergency.
 - Provide emergency contact information, medications, and information about other health issues that may need to be addressed on the school campus.
 - Schedule a well-child visit with your child's pediatrician to ensure that your child is physically fit for school.
 - Be sure all required vaccines are up to date, especially for those children entering school for the first time.
 - If your child will be participating in school sponsored sports, there may be a physical requirement and forms to submit in order to play.
 - If your child sees a specialist for a specific disability, be sure those medications and treatment plans are adjusted for the school year.
-



TIPS TO TRANSITION FROM SUMMER TO SCHOOL

- Set up a bedtime routine for both parents and children, so both of you are ready to start the day on time and be alert come morning.
 - Start a morning routine a couple of weeks before school begins, for both parents and children. This will allow summer sleep patterns to adjust to a school sleep schedule.
 - If your child will be riding the bus, become familiar with the bus route to school. Learn the bus pick up and drop off times; if driving your child, check out the traffic pattern for dropping off and picking up procedures.
 - Start practicing skills that will be used each day in school. For preschoolers and kindergartners, teach them how to hang up their coat, proper bathroom etiquette, cafeteria procedures, how to open lunch food containers, etc.
 - Talk with your child about the beginning of the year as a positive event. Let them know that you are always there to help.
 - Let them know that they will be safe at school and help them identify trusted adults at school they can talk with if they encounter a problem. Remind your child they can always talk with you about concerns.
 - Visit the library or find books online that feature children starting school. These books can help them understand their feelings about moving up a grade or starting school for the first time.
 - Have your child select a special item or photograph from home to bring to school. If they feel sad or anxious, they can reach into their desk and know they are loved even when away from their family. Please let their teacher know about this item, and that no one touches it except the child.
-



TIPS REGARDING HOMEWORK

- Have a designated homework location in your home. Some kids need a quiet location, while others may need background noise or music. Adjust to meet your child's individual needs.
- Have all necessary supplies available in the designated homework area. A basket or shower caddy often works well to store pencils, pens, erasers. A bigger bin or banker box works well for storing bigger items, such as paper, folders, notebooks, laptop, earphones, etc.
- Be present. Sit with your child and talk through what needs to be done. Once they start to work, you may leave.
- Be available to answer questions and offer assistance if needed, but never do your child's homework for them.
- Avoid interruptions. Limit cell phone use and other technology to break times or until homework is completed.
- Put completed homework into a designated folder or notebook that is color coded by subject. Color coding also helps with visual learners. Teach organization by instructing your child about what goes in, and what comes out of, the backpack each day. Load the book bag at night and put on "launch pad," usually a designated location by the door, so it is ready to go in the morning.
- Speak with the teacher about adjusting the amount of homework, if your child is struggling with the work spending hours completing it in the evenings. Educational experts suggest no more than 10 minutes per grade for homework. For upper elementary students, take a break every 10-15 minutes of work, for middle and high schoolers, take a break at 20-30 minutes.
www.understood.org
- Encourage your child to be comfortable asking questions. Learning means asking questions. Asking questions to clarify homework could save hours of frustration.

- Give rewards for improved organization, for example, finding a book or paper when asked. Teaching organizational skills will benefit them the rest of their lives. Organization is one of the most important executive function skills students need, along with time management.

[Homework ideas that work.pdf](#)



TIPS FOR COMPLETING LONG-TERM PROJECTS

- Ask the teacher to notify you when long term projects are assigned. Parent notification accommodations can be added to both IEPs and Section 504 Plans
- While digital calendars work well to keep track of schedules, another tip is to still post a home calendar, such as a month-at-a glance type of calendar. Have your student write the dates for each project for reinforcement. Each child can be assigned a specific color when adding notes to the calendar.
- Review the project with your child and the steps needed to complete the project by the due date. Start at the due date and work backwards. Break the project up over the period into smaller pieces, so that progress is felt by your child as they move through the work and they meet the final due date. This is a skill that will aide them throughout life, not just for school assignments.
- Make to-do lists so that specific short-term goals can be checked off and give a sense of accomplishment and positive feedback for students who struggle to stay focused.
- Set up folders or binders with dividers than can be clearly marked. Put pieces of the project in these folders as completed, so not misplaced. If completing projects on a computer, be sure to instruct your child on how to save their work and make a back-up to prevent accidental deletes.



TIPS FOR BUILDING SOCIAL SKILLS

- Focus on your child's interests, such as sports, martial arts, clubs, and encourage them to join or participate. Kids interact well with those who share the same interests.
- Set up play dates for younger children with kids of similar interests or similar social skills.
- Be your child's social coach. Discuss situations and how to handle them. Talk about what might happen in a new social situation, and let your child choose a course of action. Follow up to see how your child handled the problem and strategize what to do differently the next time.
- Be specific about social situations and rules your child may need help with. Children with ADHD, autism, and learning disabilities may have difficulty interpreting facial expressions and body language.
- Include social skills as functional performance goals on their IEP, so that your child receives specially designed instruction on making eye contact, entering into a group conversation, recognizing facial expressions, body language, and personal space.
- Help your child to be aware of current events that would help them get along better with their peers, such as the latest video or computer games, current won-lost records of favorite sports teams, and popular musical groups.
- Set up a play group so that kids can meet up with other classmates before school starts.
- Parent support groups can support each other by sharing resources, school supplies, homework, and more.

- Peer group activities with students in the next grade up will help your child if they can talk with someone who has already attended that grade level. If the older student is willing to exchange contact information, that older student may become your child's mentor.
 - Meet with the teacher to discuss academic expectations and your family's values and culture. This meeting also provides an opportunity to discuss how your family's culture can be incorporated into the classroom activities.
-

On a scale of 1-4, rate the relevance of this OCECD newsletter for your own child/students'/consumers' experiences.



Not Relevant



Very Relevant

NEXT →

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

OHIO COALITION FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



www.ocecd.org
844-382-5452



The information provided in this newsletter is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered as legal advice.

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR PRESCHOOL PARENTS



Nothing can be more stressful for a parent than to get repeated calls from their child's school requesting that they must come and pick up their child due to behaviors that are out of control. Many parents also are frustrated due to the school's use of repeated punishments that have not resulted in positive behavior changes.

The challenge for both parents and educators is to work together to find new ways of understanding and addressing the interactions between a child and his or her school environment so that useful interventions can be developed that lead to lasting behavior change. The focus of this newsletter will be to provide information for parents about the strategies schools may use to help children learn appropriate behavioral skills.

If a child has been identified as a student with a disability or suspected of a disability under IDEA [Individuals with Education Disability Act], the school must provide the services and supports needed by the student to receive FAPE [Free Appropriate Public Education]. These services must be based on the student's unique needs and not determined by the category of disability service listed in Section 4 of the ETR [Evaluation Team Report]. Students identified as students with disabilities, not requiring special education services, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, also are to be provided accommodations that will provide FAPE. Keep in mind that the most effective tool approach teachers have to use to handle problem behavior is to develop and implement strategies that will prevent or decrease the likelihood of poor behavior choices from occurring in the first place. Ohio's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS] programs help schools to recognize the benefits of preventive school discipline and allow for student success.

PBIS is the only approach to addressing behavior that is specifically mentioned in IDEA. The PBIS efforts in Ohio are primarily supported by the Department's Office of Integrated Student Supports, the sixteen regional State Support Teams (SST), and many Educational Services Centers (ESC), as well as being implemented in schools statewide. [About Ohio PBIS | Ohio Department of Education](#) IDEA requires the IEP team to consider the use of PBIS for any student whose behavior has impeded his or her learning or the learning of others. Since IDEA requires the implementation of PBIS, IEP teams, including the parent/guardians, should have knowledge of PBIS so that it may be implemented to improve outcomes and address behavior.

The focus of PBIS is prevention, by having supports in place and a plan if needed to address specific behaviors or a pattern of behaviors. PBIS HAS has 3 tiers of support for behavior and for when the behavior stems from their a student's disability.



TIPS FOR PRESCHOOL TIME MANAGEMENT

For more detailed information about the 3 tiers of PBIS:

PBISworld.com Tier 1 <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/>

[PBISworld.com](#) Tier 2 <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/>

[PBISworld.com](#) Tier 3 <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-3/>

Ohio endorses Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports [PBIS]. Please see:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/PBIS-Resources>

[Information for Families about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\) - Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center \(osu.edu\)](#)

[Center on PBIS](#)

The Ohio Department of Education has divided the state into 16 State Support Teams [SSTs]. Each SST has PBIS consultants on staff to work with parents and schools. See the link to the PBIS resources at State Support Team Region 11:

https://www.sst11.org/Downloads/PB41A-Positive_Behavioral_Interventions-Final.pdf

The links to the other SSTs is listed below.

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/District-and-School-Continuous-Improvement/State-Support-Teams>

For IEP teams to provide goals and objectives that address both academic achievement and functional performance, they must change their opinion that the child IS a problem to the understanding that the child HAS a problem. To illustrate, Devon is a 12-year-old boy refusing to do his schoolwork. When reminded to get busy, he may swear, spit, or throw his work on the floor. If the educator feels Devon IS the problem because he is lazy or disrespectful, the educator may respond to undesirable behavior negatively with punishment or threats. In fact, Devon may have learned that his behavior is successful in getting him out of doing required work. Being sent home becomes a “reward,” not a punishment, that may actually reinforce the undesirable behavior it was designed to correct. This is known as negative reinforcement. When the educator feels that Devon IS the problem, his IEP goals may not include functional performance goals which would provide specially designed instruction for improving his behaviors and social-emotional skills. Good grades may not be as important as social-emotional skills in Devon’s adult life. No one ever loses a job for a D in history, but they may do so if they lack the social-emotional skills to work well with others.



TIPS TO DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS

- Social skills begin to develop in preschool. Preschoolers with ADHD, autism, and other disabilities may have functional social skills that lag behind their chronological age. This lack of social maturity may result in their not noticing social cues and protocols.
- Use direct instruction and role playing to practice expected behaviors.
- Practice telephone etiquette by having your child record a practice message. “Hi, this is José. Would you like to come play with me?” Also, if they answer your phone, show them how to use the mute to prevent yelling your name in the caller’s ear.
- Anticipate difficult situations that may happen at home, at school, or in a store. Preplan or do social stories about going to a new location or meeting strangers, even people with physical disabilities or the elderly.
- Remember that with many ADHD students, whatever is on their mind comes out of their mouth. They do not stop to think about how it sounds or feels to others.

- Be positive, calm, and confident that everything will go well. If you ask them about being scared, you may make them afraid of starting school. If they do get anxious, reassure them that you are nearby if they need you.
-



TIPS ON HOW TO HANDLE PRESCHOOL DROP OFF and SEPARATION ANXIETY

- Fran Walfish, author of [The Self-Aware Parent](#), wrote in Parents, November 23, 2022, [The Self-Aware Parent: Resolving Conflict and Building a Better Bond with Your Child: Walfish, Fran: 9780230102569: Amazon.com: Books](#) that “it can take up to ten weeks for a child to fully be ready to be left at school without their parent.” She suggested that the best way to handle separation anxiety is to have the parent go to school (if possible) and sit next to their child, but do not interact with them, but rather be there as a safety net.
 - Create a goodbye ritual or a goodbye routine that provides comfort and enables your child to predict what will happen next. It might be a special handshake or hug followed by “See you later, alligator!” to their response “After a while crocodile.” Once you said your good-byes, leave.
 - Remind them that you came back to pick them up just like you said you would. That way each day’s drop-off won’t be a repeat of the first time.
 - Parents of preschoolers with separation anxiety will benefit from meeting the teachers before school starts to find out how the teacher responds to children that cry for their parents. Explain to the teacher any calming techniques that you have used at home, so that the teacher can try to replicate those techniques in the classroom
 - Unless the environment is not safe for your child, do not pull your child out of preschool due to a bad first reaction. Your child needs opportunities to learn how to work through their negative feelings. By pulling them out, it sets a precedent of not having to face problems.
 - Be patient with your preschooler and with yourself. It is OK to leave them while crying.
-



BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR EARLY ELEMENTARY PARENTS

- Early elementary grades bring more challenges than just school supplies and schedules. Social skills start to play a more important role in both academic and social success. “Kindergarten is a wake-up call for many kids with ADHD, autism, and related disabilities,” as stated by Shari Ghent, in *Overcome all those firsts* published in ADDitude magazine, August 13, 2020. She goes on to explain that suddenly not only do they need to learn classroom rules, but they also need to make new friends, learn new skills, get along with students from other backgrounds, and work in large groups. [ADHD & Kindergarten: Social Skills Help for Children \(additudemag.com\)](https://www.additudemag.com).
-



TIPS FOR DEVELOPING SOCIAL SKILLS and DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

- Before school starts, work with your child to develop more self-awareness. Talk about their feelings, have your child draw faces with different expressions. Ask when they had that feeling and why. This exercise also will expand their vocabulary while identifying their emotions.
- Next step, move on how to identify the feelings of others. How does grandma’s face look when happy or sad? What does your face look like when happy or sad? How are they alike? How are they different? This also will help the child identify body language that may accompany a specific facial expression.

- Teach the concept of personal space. Be specific about what is appropriate and what is not and provide visual cues. A good starting point is to have your child stretch out their arms and explain that that is their personal space. Other children have their personal space. Explain that if they get too close to another student, they might react negatively.
 - Friendships and interpersonal problems become more prevalent in elementary grades. Work with your child to identify what they like and dislike in a friend.
 - Begin working on decision-making skills. Talk with the school librarian or public library children's librarian to find books that have main characters that make decisions. Talk about what is the problem and how the main characters solved this problem. Ask what they would do differently.
 - Discuss consequences of decision, such as if they don't go to bed on time, what will they be like at school tomorrow? What will their teacher think if they fall asleep at school? If they understand how their actions will affect others, it will help responsible decision-making.
 - Give your child room to make decisions at home so that they are prepared to make decisions in the school classroom settings.
-



TIPS FOR DEVELOPING ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Read books aloud with your child. Do not pressure your child to read aloud. This is fun time.
- Praise effort over achievement. Knowing that they are smart enough to do the work but cannot sustain the attention needed to finish work adds to their frustration.
- Make homework easier. Talk with the teacher about getting a homework packet at the beginning of the week. You might want to try snacking while working on homework.
- If they work better standing at the kitchen counter or hanging upside down off the couch, let them do it.

- If not already addressed on your student's IEP or Section 504 Plan, talk with school about adding limiting homework by time limit or selected sampling of questions.
 - Eliminate any "busy work" assignments, if the skill has been mastered.
-



BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS FOR LATE ELEMENTARY PARENTS

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING SELF AWARENESS

- During the summer, continue focusing on developing the self-awareness skills that began to develop in early elementary grades.
- Late elementary students must deal with complex feelings, such as, "Why does their friend feel rejected not being invited to a birthday party?" If your child lacks this self-awareness, relate the character to your child. For example, "I remember when you were not invited to a birthday party. How did you feel? Does your friend feel the same way?"
- To help your child understand and respond to the perspectives of others, talk with them about books they are reading or a television show or movie that they watched recently. For example, ask what would happen if the Sonic the Hedgehog cartoon was written by Dr. Robotnik. This teaches your child to see life through different eyes and also builds empathy and understanding.

TIPS THAT ADDRESS STRESS AND SOCIAL SKILLS

As your child ages, stress will start to impact pre-teens more than in early grades. They may begin to feel the stress that results from more demanding homework or the increased social pressures that come with the pre-teen years. You may want to explore physical exercise as a stress releaser, such as going on a walk, Yoga, shooting hoops. School stress may require a discussion with the teacher.

- If parents and teachers work together, they can identify the causes of stress or other emotions. Then they can aid in finding ways to help manage those feelings early in the school year.

- Demonstrating self-calming techniques, such as taking a few deep breaths, will show your child that it is possible to calm down. Work on this skill when your child is not angry.
- Social awareness becomes more important as children advance in school. Before the new school year starts, talk with your child about the news on TV or radio. These chats will help give them topics as conversation starters with classmates. Ask your child to give you their opinion on these issues and talk about the people involved on both sides
- Practice active listening. Ask your child to tell you about their weekend while you fidget and don't make eye contact. Then ask them to describe your body language and how it felt when you were not listening to them. Being an active listener will improve learning and social skills at school and at home.
- Peer pressure becomes more intense at this age, especially for students with disabilities and those with lagging social skills. Before school starts, talk with your child about positive and negative peer pressure and if their peers are steering them in the right direction or the wrong direction. Work together to identify negative pressures and figure out ways they can stand up for themselves the next time they find themselves in a negative peer situation.
- This may also be a good time to start talking about tobacco, alcohol, and drug prevention strategies. It is never too early to teach children, especially those with social skill deficits, how to avoid these influences.

TIPS FOR ORGANIZATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT

- Work on organization and time management skills during the summer. Simple routines, such as setting the table or laying out clothes for the next day, will help teach and develop self-management, organization, and time management on a small level by having your child work through a set of tasks to complete a goal.



- The school environment changes dramatically in middle school. Susan Kruger's article in ADDitude Magazine stated that students are expected to manage more of their life on their own. At the same time, the students themselves are changing. They are less motivated to please adults and more motivated to impress peers. As they search for the own identities, the social scene becomes more important. This is particularly daunting for students with ADHD, whose functional age may be 3-5 years behind their chronological age. Let your child know that you are there to listen and offer advice, but only if they ask for it. Try sharing stories of embarrassing times you had growing up, or have family members share as well. Being a supportive parent can help your child through feelings of self-doubt and self-consciousness. [Middle School Organization: School and Learning for Tweens & Teens \(additudemag.com\)](http://additudemag.com).
- Middle school can be an awkward time for students. They may be moving into a larger school building with more peers and changing classrooms for the first time. Children with disabilities may have an even more difficult time adjusting to this new academic and social scene. Talk with your middle schooler about how all of their classmates are going through the same challenges but at different rates. Encourage them to join a club to get to know more students with similar interests.

TIPS FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Self-management becomes more prevalent. Even though kids at this age are more difficult to deal with, parents need to remain calm, address their child with respect, and show them what self-management looks like. Parents need to remember that it is better to stay calm when dealing with their child's storm. "I'm going to count to ten before I respond."
- Another way to develop self-management skills is to let them pick a task to do that helps the house run smoothly, such as doing dishes, feeding the family pet, or folding laundry.
- Slamming doors, yelling, or acting out against family members or friends may happen frequently at this age. When your child has calmed down from an outburst, talk about how their actions reflect on them and affect the family. By pointing out how their actions affect others and how others perceive them, you have given your child a tool to see the impact of their behavior on the people who matter to them—including themselves.

TIPS FOR ORGANIZATION

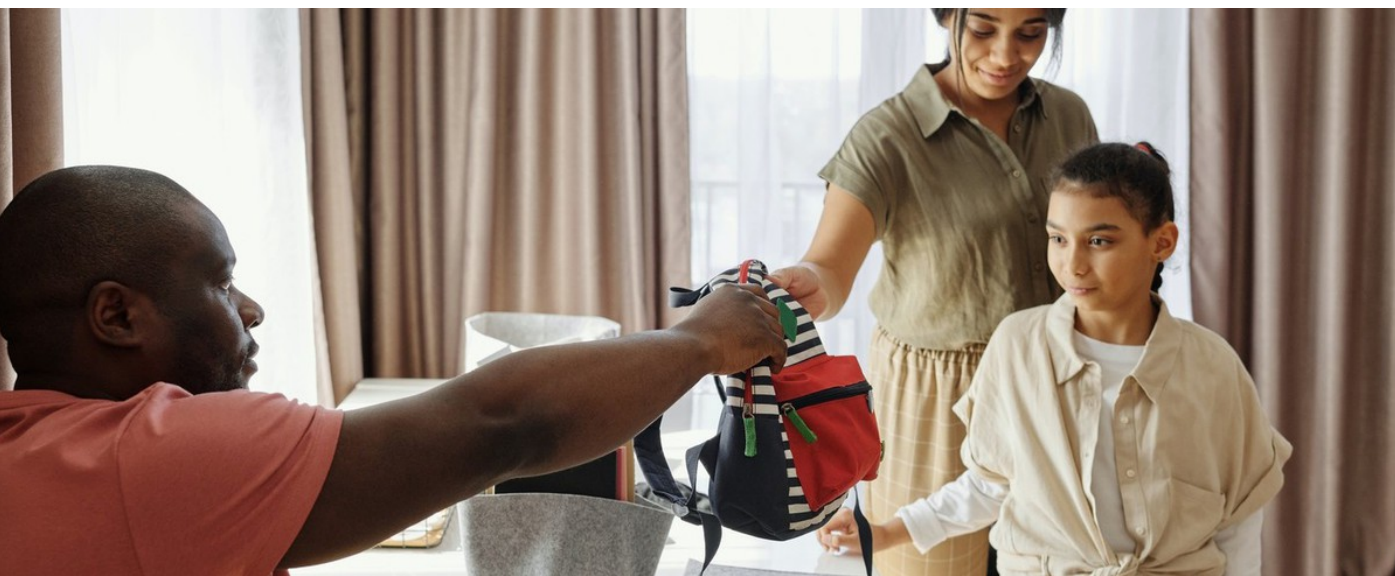
- Organization skills need to be developed to make them more independent. A school planner should be "a must" in middle school. No one can remember everything; however, those at special at risk are students with weak executive function deficits, students with ADHD, autism, and learning disabilities to name a few.
- Susan Kruger, in her article in ADDitude Magazine, stated that it "takes two," two minutes that is, to organize papers every day that come home in the backpack. After two minutes, students are ready to start homework.
- Pack backpack or book bag every night before bedtime, and this will eliminate the morning rush mayhem. Check planner to be sure nothing is skipped.

TIPS TO ADDRESS BULLYING AND SOCIAL SKILL

- Bullying and cyberbullying become more prevalent. Talk with your child and ask if they have ever dealt with bullying and work together on ways to handle these types of situations. Explain to your adolescent that nothing can be erased after it is posted on social media.
- Social worlds broaden in middle school. Take time to talk with your child about their social life and their role as a friend. Try not to be judgmental. A good way to find out what is going on with your middle schooler is to offer to drive them and their friends. Parents learn a great deal by listening to their conversations in the car, plus parents get to know more about their child's friends and what they are doing.
- Chat with your kids in the car. When coming home from events, ask some open-ended statements and let them tell you what happened.

TIPS FOR DECISION MAKING

- Decision making skills are developing, and they may make decisions that parents do not agree with. Even if you know it was a bad decision, talk with them about what they learned from their decision and how they could do it differently next time. It is important to show your teen that even if you don't agree with a poor decision, you will still love them and be there to talk with them. Instead of "I told you so!", say "What would have been a better choice?"
 - Smoking and drinking need to be discussed. Explain that they can always call you rather than getting into a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.
-



Back to school Tips for High Schoolers and their Parents

When students enter high school, especially those students with disabilities, a whole new range of challenges develop. Up until now, students just did assignments, but now they will add more studying techniques. This also is the time when students look forward to life after high school.

- Students on IEPs may start attending their IEP meetings for the first time. The IEP's transition plan in Section 5 is their future, and they should be an active participant, if at all possible. Our *Postsecondary Transition* is a good resource for parents to check out.

High school students may prefer:

- <https://www.oecd.org/youthportal.aspx>
- Adventures in Youth Empowerment graphic novel
- <https://filecabinet5.eschoolview.com/7132D93C-113A-42DB-AD9B-3D42946C44E5/b379e97c-edff-4537-a846-01b789e9f7a9.pdf>
- <https://filecabinet5.eschoolview.com/7132D93C-113A-42DB-AD9B-3D42946C44E5/a5e9a34b-70dd-4ee8-8c6b-0777371e6517.pdf>
- All of these factors can create concerns, worries, and anxiety for some high school students. Please refer to the OECD Spring Newsletter that focused on mental health, well-being, and resources. [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities News Article \(oecd.org\)](#).

TIPS ON HOW TO STUDY

An excellent resource: [About Susan Kruger, M.Ed. America's #1 Learning Expert \(studyskills.com\)](#)

- Jot down notes on sticky notes as read a novel or textbook.
- Create their own study guide by pulling out old tests, notes and ask classmates what they think is important. Study buddies may help. Try it and see.
- Don't cram for tests. Students remember more for longer periods of time if spread into smaller pieces.
- Set time to study 20 minutes before start homework.
- Studies show that you will remember more if you take 10-15 minutes to review what you studied just before you go to sleep. [Scientists Say Studying Before Bedtime is Best – Chronobiology.com](#)
- If your child does not know how to study, some study tips that may work include reviewing notes they took in class, set up a study group, practice teaching the material to you, their parents. If they can teach it, they will do well on exams.

TIPS ON TIME MANAGEMENT

Help them manage time to study effectively. Many students with disabilities have a very difficult time recognizing the passage of time. It even has a name, "time blindness."

- Time management is a taught skill. Students do not learn it on their own. A physical calendar, phone calendar, or home-based family wall calendar will help students track what needs to be done and by when.
 - Help them to learn how to prioritize assignments and other activities.
-



TIPS FOR CAREER PLANNING

Discuss potential career, personal, or higher education goals with your child. Support your student's dreams for their future.

- Interest and career assessments can help to identify their strengths and what jobs match those skills.
- Set goals and discuss expectations. Find out what courses are available at the high school so that you can help your teen select courses that will fit in a career program. Try to keep current on what technical colleges, trade schools, or colleges expect.
- Your student may benefit from an apprenticeship or job shadowing.
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities [OOD] is an excellent resource for students with disabilities, starting at age 14. [About Us | Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities](#)

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS, STRESS, AND SOCIAL LIFE

- Talk with your teen about rules for their social life. It is important that they have some say in their social activities as they become more independent.
- Talk with them about privileges, responsibilities, and curfew. Work together to set rules and consequences for breaking them.
- Also talk with your teen about their possible romantic partners. Ask about what their friends do after school. This may get them to open up about their dating life. Do not be surprised if they do not want to talk about this aspect of their life. When ready to talk with you, be an active nonjudgmental listener.
- You may want to do a search of online resources that discuss sexuality that focus on the facts.
- As your child transitions into young adulthood, additional responsibilities, and social pressures may lead to increased stress. Talk with your teen about how they can better handle

stress, for example, taking deep breaths, exercising, going for a walk, yoga, getting more sleep, making a to-do list to organize and prioritize assignments, and other commitments.

- If your teen is hesitant to talk about themselves or friends, you may want to discuss what is in the news. You can ask your teen what they think about these news stories.
- Try to see their point of view on what stresses them and not minimize what feels like a big issue for a teen. Signs of stress parents should watch out for include sleep problems, appetite/eating changes, short temper, depression, and worrying about something for a prolonged period of time. Please refer to the OCECD Spring Newsletter that focused on mental health and anxiety. [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities News Article \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/education/2019/04/2019-04-01-ohio-coalition-for-the-education-of-children-with-disabilities-news-article).

TIPS THAT ADDRESS BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Talk about bullying and cyberbullying which is growing at an alarming rate. This is especially true in high schools where cliques, belonging, and popularity are the focus of the teen's social world.

- Bullying can take many forms, such as name-calling, physical harassment, and cyberbullying. Many teens don't realize that their behavior makes them a bully.
- Talk with your teen about whether they have been a victim of bullying or if they have witnessed it happening to other students. Discuss how they felt if bullied or how they think these victims feel.
- Discuss reporting on-campus bullying to the appropriate school personnel.
- Smoking, drinking, vaping, and use of other drugs need to be discussed. Explain that they can always call you rather than getting into a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.

TIPS THAT DEVELOP DECISION MAKING and SELF-MANAGEMENT

Decision making skills for high school students are critical when they soon will be heading out into the world and making adult decisions.

- One of the most relevant topics to cover is finances. Explain to your teen the value of a monthly budget for paying bills, buying groceries and clothes, social events, and gifts. Paying for college also should be discussed. The more you speak to your teen about money and adulthood, the better prepared they will be to make responsible decisions about their future.
 - There will be many other choices they may make without consulting you. By supporting your teen's growing independence and the choices they make, not only have you given them more confidence in their own choices, but increased their ability to trust and believe in themselves.
-

CONCLUSION

[Lisa Rudy said it best in her article of tips for parents of disabled children](#)

“Yes, it should be the school’s job to be sure your child has what they need to succeed. But the bottom line is that no one cares about, understands, or advocates for your child as well as you can!”

If you need assistance, remember we are just a phone call or email away when help is needed.

OCECD phone: 740-382-5452 or email: ocecd@ocecd.org

For additional resources, visit our website: www.ocecd.org

Also check out:

<https://www.understood.org/en/search-results?query=Back+to+school>

[The-Ultimate-ADHD-Toolkit-1.pdf \(additudemag.com\)](#)

[Search Results | Understood](#) Back-to-school resources

[Families of Students with Disabilities | Ohio Department of Education](#)

[Students with Disabilities | Ohio.gov | Official Website of the State of Ohio](#)

[Are There Other Resources and Supports for My Child and Family? | Ohio Early Intervention](#)

[Developmental Disabilities Services Toolkit | Department of Developmental Disabilities \(ohio.gov\)](#)

[Resources for Parents | Ohio Children's Trust Fund](#)

DISCLAIMER:

OCECD does not endorse nor recommend the purchase of any products listed in this article.

On a scale of 1-4, rate the relevance of this OCECD newsletter for your own child/students'/consumers' experiences.



Not Relevant



Very Relevant

NEXT →