



Back to School Advice!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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As the new school year approaches there are some parents who will be sad to see the summer fun end and others who are counting the sleeps until everything gets back into a routine. Preparing your child for the re-entry into school is important and there are several things that you, as the parent, can do to help things get off on the best foot:

1. Get the proper school supplies - Now you don't have to buy everything new but you do need to ensure that your child has what the teacher recommends. Try having a scavenger hunt and challenge participants to find as many items as possible on the list. Make sure you have the child's name marked on all the items.
2. Impress on the child that this is their "job" - Even though there are lots of fun activities and friends at the school, there are also lessons to be learned. Homework should be taken seriously and it is up to the child to do their best at the tasks before them.
3. Become an active school supporter - Get to know the school personnel so that you can help to solve any problems that might arise before they are out of control. Make a commitment to attend Parent-Teacher interviews and read the school newsletters.
4. Ensure that the child attends every day and is on time - It is not okay to allow children to stay home because they don't feel like going to school, are afraid of a bully or don't like the field trip that is planned. There are enough holidays during the year that you shouldn't be taking them out of school for skiing, travel or other personal reasons either.
5. Promote healthy practices - Make sure that your child has had good sleep and proper nutrition so that they are best prepared to learn. Letting them stay up late on a school night and filling them up with junk food and pop will not do it!
6. Remember to encourage achievement and acknowledge progress without building stress with unrealistic expectations. The goal is for you child to do his/her best which is not necessarily being "the" best.

One of the very best things you can do for your child is to be a good example. If you disrespect the school or your co-workers, call in sick when you really just want a day off, or complain all the time about what you "have to do", your child will likely begin modelling this in their own situation.

On the other hand, when you are thankful to have a job, speak positively about the work setting and practice healthy self-care, you will be an inspiration for the child who will likely do the same things!