



COMMUNICATIONS

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School-readiness tips to reengage for a new school year

As students begin learning in a new year, they need to reengage their brains after a long summer break. Summer can be a time of significant learning loss for students of every age, and teachers spend class time bringing them back up to speed before introducing new materials.

Some parents don't know this, or they don't know how to address this. Schools can help parents jump-start the learning process with at-home practice — not formal homework but rather activities that help kids get back up to speed academically.

Schools can share learning tips at the start of the new school year. Teachers may have their own suggestions for at-home activities as well. Here are some suggestions to share with parents.

Suggested activities

Math

- Use car rides to review math facts and quiz age-appropriate computations.
- Find online math activities and games for students and help your children find the areas appropriate for their level. Check Khan Academy or Scholastic to get started. Offer

small rewards as they make progress.

- Provide math workbooks and puzzles for car trips and idle times.
- Download learning apps on your phone. View a list of recommendations at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/94557>.

Reading

- Encourage recreational reading. Visit the library to find interesting and age-appropriate books. Ask your child's teacher for reading-level recommendations. Books that are too easy or hard won't help. Model reading by checking out books for yourself.
- Talk about books. Let your children read to you at bedtime. Ask them to tell you about what they have read. Ask if there is anything they did not understand.
- Start family book journals. Include the book title, reading dates, author and a brief description of the book. Set weekly reading goals.

Writing and spelling

- Encourage your child to keep a notebook of new words. Help your child look up the definition and write it in the

notebook. Ask your child to spell the word.

- Use car trips to practice spelling.
- Encourage your child to begin a diary or journal and write an entry every day.

Establish home routines

For many families, the start of the school year is hectic. Schedules are busier and children may be involved in multiple activities. It can be a challenge to create consistency and calm. Set routines at the beginning and end of the day to help children build healthy habits and give them a sense of security.

Starting the day right

- Help your children pack their backpacks for school the night before.
- Make lunches, sign field trip permission slips and review other school materials in the evening.
- Lay out tomorrow's clothes before bed.
- Agree on the details of your schedule as a family, and post it where all members can see it. Include chores, homework, activities and bedtime.

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- Eat breakfast with your children.

After school and in the evening

- Set a schedule and be consistent. Plan a regular time for homework, meals, TV and bed.
- Talk about the next day's schedule so your children know what to expect.
- Eat dinner together and allow time for each family member to talk about their day.
- Set rules for TV. Turn it off at least an hour before bed. TV can be stimulating and disrupt sleep.
- Read with your children before bed.