



The first day of school. . . ah, yes. The smell of new shoes and freshly sharpened pencils. It's an exciting time. But have you done all you can to prepare your child? Be sure to add this health checklist to your back-to-school to-do list.

Get to the point. Ask your child's pediatrician which shots your child needs before starting school. Or go to the website of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) (www.aap.org) to find an up-to-date list of the vaccinations recommended at different ages. Know that legal requirements vary from state to state.

Back off. Ever seen kids saddled with backpacks so full that they look like the Hunchback of Notre Dame? Not funny. Heavy backpacks can cause neck, shoulder, and back pain – and possibly longer-term problems. Make sure your child's backpack doesn't weigh more than 20 percent of his or her body weight. To ease your child's load, look for lightweight or rolling backpacks with wide, padded shoulder straps, padded backs, and waist straps for added support.

Learn to share (information). Make sure to provide the school with an up-to-date list of contacts. List people in the order they should be called, such as mother, father, aunt, and friend. Include your child's doctor and dentist, too.

Give a list of any medications your child takes to the school nurse or secretary. Supply medication your child needs at school in a clearly marked pharmacy bottle. Provide instructions on how to take it and what to do in an emergency.

Does your child have asthma? Share your child's asthma action plan with your child's teachers and coaches as well as the school nurse and front office administrators. This action plan includes details about symptoms, medications, any limitations on activities, and what to do if prescribed medication doesn't work.

If you suspect your child might have a learning disability, discuss this with your child's teacher as soon as possible. Testing can confirm this and identify any steps you and the school can take to help your child succeed in school.

Listen up and watch out. Have you noticed your child pressing a book close to her face or turning up the volume when watching television? But if you suspect a problem, talk with your pediatrician right away. Luckily, some states also include hearing and vision testing as part of preschool and elementary school screening. Without a test, though, you can't always tell your child is having trouble. Some children even try to fake out their parents! As you know, hearing or vision loss can lead to big challenges learning in school, so uncovering these problems is important. If your child needs glasses and plays sports, go for polycarbonate sports frames and lenses.

Fuel 'em up. Food and rest are essential for a productive day at school. Help your child make the transition to school by gradually easing into an earlier bedtime. Then make sure your child is getting at least eight to 10 hours of sleep a day. Make breakfast a habit – kids who eat breakfast stay more alert in class.

Help your child take a "chill pill." Do you have a child who is anxious in new situations? Who dreads the first day of school? You can help. Have your child meet the teacher and visit the classroom before school starts. Talk through what to expect. And have everything ready to go the night before school starts. Rushing around on the first day of school is a recipe for disaster.

Have questions? Need supplies? Just stop by our store for help.



If you have any questions please feel free to contact me @ 873-3244 or mcglynnrx@tds.net
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