



THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

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Back to School Again!

After a long, hot summer in Texas (or where ever you live), it is back to school again. Here are some tips to help make the transition for your child or teen easier, especially for those who are transitioning to middle or high school or from a private school to a public school. These reminders are something that every good parent should know, but sometimes fail to act.

1. **Make an appointment** with your child's principal, assistant principal or counselor where your child will be enrolled this fall. An early face-to-face conference will help you establish a relationship with administration in the event there is an academic or social issue during the school year.
2. Without being overly protective of your child, let the administration know of any **health, social or emotional issues**, especially if the child is learning disabled. If there are health issues, place a letter from the child's doctor in the health file. Make sure that all **required immunizations** are up-to-date.
3. **Inquire about special programs** or extra-curricular activities that may be of interest to your child. School memories are made from the special activities that your child or teen enjoys.
4. **Update contact information** with the school secretary so that you can be reached in the event of your child's illness or a problem that needs your immediate attention.
5. You have the right to **inspect your child's school records** to correct any written errors in the record, such as the correct birth date, Social Security number, etc.. There is a process for correcting written records if you have proper documentation.
6. If your child faced **disciplinary action the previous year**, that information should be removed unless the disciplinary action was carried over into the current school year. Know your child's legal rights.
7. Ask about **volunteer opportunities** at the school. Even if you have a demanding work and family schedule, there may be a service that you can provide so that you are a valuable member of the school community. For example, tutoring a child in reading or math, helping in the library or office, making treats for Teacher Appreciation Days.
8. If you hear "**sensational reports**" from the media about your child's school, contact the school administration for information. Stories often get started that are false, but they take on a life of their own.
9. In the event of **bad weather** or snow days, listen to your local TV or radio station for news of school closings. Don't drop your kids off at school when no cars are in the parking lot! (Yes, that happens!)
10. Support your child's school by joining the **parent teacher association** and attending the **special events** planned by the teachers. No matter the age of your child or teen, they need to know that you care about them and enjoy attending their school activities.

It was a wise school superintendent who said, "Children do not care what you know, until they know that you care." I hope that your child or teen has at least one teacher who not only "knows" but also "cares."

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