



Monthly Parenting Tip from the ACFC

SEPTEMBER 2026

Back-to-School Success



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The back-to-school season is upon us, bringing a mix of excitement and anxiety for both parents and children. Parents are actively looking for structure. Active Parenting is here to help with school-success tips. Whether the children are starting kindergarten or heading back to high school, these tips can make this transition as smooth and successful as possible.

Establishing Routines Without Power Struggles

One of the biggest challenges families face during the back-to-school season is the sudden shift from relaxed summer schedules to structured school days. Morning rushes, bedtime battles and homework conflicts can quickly create stress for both parents and children. What parents can do:

1. Co-Create Routines: Begin rebuilding routines *before* problems arise. Start adjusting sleep schedules and mealtimes a week or two before school starts to help your child's body get back into a school-ready rhythm. Rather than issuing commands, involve children in creating a plan by asking open-ended questions like:

- What time do you think you need to wake up to avoid feeling rushed?
- What can we do the night before to make mornings easier?
- How can our family work together to make school days less stressful?

2. Encourage Responsibility: Help your children develop organizational skills and take genuine ownership of their schoolwork. Guide your kids in using a simple paper planner, family white-board calendar, or digital calendar to track assignments, test dates and extracurricular deadlines. Encourage children to set realistic academic and personal goals for the year. Setting goals gives children a sense of direction and helps them take ownership of their learning while boosting motivation.

3. Celebrate Success: Notice, acknowledge and celebrate your child's achievements and positive efforts, both big and small. Celebrating progress—like getting out the door on time or finishing a tough homework assignment—builds ongoing confidence, self-esteem and internal motivation to keep up the good work.

4. The Active Parenting Principle (Collaboration for Cooperation, Responsibility, & Encouragement): When children help create the routine, they are more likely to cooperate with it. And when children take responsibility for their work and schedule, they develop self-discipline and can take pride in their independence. Use encouragement instead of constant nagging and to focus on progress rather than perfection.

Check back next month for tips on how to help children manage back-to-school anxiety.

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfccares.com), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.