

Supporting Back-to-School Season



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**Routines Take time to
take root**



➤ Routines take time!



The transition from summer schedule to school schedules can take time.

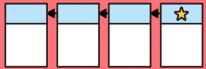
Summer often brings later bedtimes and later mornings, and the shift to an earlier morning routine can be jarring.



Consistency goes a long way toward getting back into a groove.



Preview as much as possible – so kids know what is coming. Provide your child with simple, well-defined, and easy steps for their routine so that they have a clear idea of what you expect and so that it's easy to follow along with you! (e.g. packing their backpack the night before)





**Our evenings affect our
mornings**

➤ Sleep routines are key



We all do our best well rested. Establishing consistent afternoon, bedtime, and wake up times for kids to prepare for school times can ease the summer transition process and help kids sleep better.

Choose an after school routine that promotes a healthy balance between homework and down time.

Bedtime routines are a consistent and repetitive set of activities that can help prepare your child for sleep by having them relaxed and wind down, being mindful that different children need a different amount of sleep each night.

Morning routines can help preview the day and ease the transition into the school building.

A predictable routine also gives your child a sense of security and can help them smoothly transition to school routines and expectations.



**Getting the day started
on a positive note**

➤ Morning routines



Backward planning can help identify what steps in a process are truly necessary, and often save us time in the long run

It is an important part of building and using executive functioning skills as well!

We probably do some of these things without thinking about them but it can help children to practice aloud.

In general: Start with the end in mind! It's all about the planning.

- How much time do you need to get to school or to the bus?
- How long does it take to get dressed?
- How long to brush teeth or do hair?
- Will your child pack their backpack or snacks in the evening or morning?

➤ Backward Planning con't

Steps to consider:

- Example: When do you need to leave the house?
- Write down a list of everything you need to do in the morning.
- Prioritize and perhaps think about what you can move to the night before.
- Estimate how long each step will take
- Work backwards for each step, with your child as much as possible, to make sure you will have time for each part.

Here's a sample:

- Wake Up: 5 minutes
- Make Bed: 1 minute
- Get Dressed: 5 minutes
- Eat Breakfast: 15 minutes
- Brush Teeth: 3 minutes
- Fix Hair: 10 minutes
- Shoes On & Get Out: 3 minutes

➤ Some Samples

Checklists, Calendars, Post-its can each be helpful in building routines and helping children (and adults!) know what is coming and to help in remembering instruments, books, and other materials.

MORNING ROUTINE ✓ CHECKLIST

Create a checklist of all the tasks so your children can work implement the routine independently.

	Wake up
	Get Dressed
	Brush Teeth
	Fix Hair



Weekly Planner

NOTES	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

Specials of the Week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Art	PE	Music	Library	PE

➤ Arrival at the O!



There are some specific systems in place at the O to support all students with the transition to school each morning

Greeting

Mr. Johnson is at the front door each morning welcoming students to school.

Music

There is often music playing in the front of the school as students get off the bus and enter the building.

Visual Breakfast Menu

We have created a visual menu to help students know what is for breakfast each day of the week. This information is also on the monitor in the front lobby and can help students know what is being served.

***In addition to the universal supports above, students who are struggling with the transition to school may benefit from specific short-term support from staff in the form a more personalized greeting or check-in. We are here to help and support you.*

NO THANKS

**What if a child is refusing
to go to school?**

➤ School Refusal/ Avoidance

Is your child dreading coming to school?

While we hope that all children love coming to school and look forward to it, we know that sometimes children are nervous, or resistant to coming to school.

This may look like crying, pleading, refusal to get ready for school or to leave the house, worry around school-related issues, sleep problems, or reports of headaches or stomach aches without a physical source.

These behaviours can be seen as symptoms of anxiety and an attempt by the child or young person to avoid a situation that they perceive to be threatening.

Research does not support one specific reason or even consensus for why this happens.

➤ Some initial steps

Initial steps to supporting a child who is refusing or avoiding school can include:

- ➔ Use of incentives, and a prize chart, that rewards small successes
- ➔ We can support this at school as well, and can reward students for coming into the building for example or joining the class at first period.
- ➔ It's important that the rewards for coming to school are independent, and not tied in with other expectations (e.g. making their bed, or completing homework)
- ➔ Rewards should be scaled – so start off acknowledging small steps and then larger ones
- ➔ Let us know what system you would like us to support so we can help and also communicate back to you.
- ➔ Making drop off or bus loading as quick and efficient as possible is important to building stamina and confidence in this process for children.

➤ School Refusal/ Avoidance

Is your child refusing to get out of the car?

Once again, the nighttime routine and conversations when in a calm space, can set up the morning for greater likelihood of success.

- One key aspect is consistent messaging – and remember it will be harder for us as parents more than the children. They look to us to help regulate, and their refusal is a manifestation of their difficulty regulating their emotional response.
- Work with your child on a plan or routine for them getting out of the car, and then leave them with a pre-selected preferred adult at school (We can help with this!).
- This routine may likely feel lousy at first, but will get easier each time.
- Close communication with school will help best support your child and you.



**Learning more about the
day**

➤ Connecting with your child

Transition to and from school can be affected by home as much as school events. What happens one day can affect the next.

“How was your day?” often results in a shrug or single word answer.

Some alternatives may be–

- “What was the best part of your day?”
- “What is something that made you smile or laugh?”
- “What is one thing that surprised you today?”
- “What is one thing that challenged you today?”





**Home-School
Collaboration is Key**

➤ Home- School Collaboration

- Email!
 - Our teachers and staff want to support and if the transition to school is a challenge it helps when we are aware, to the extent you are comfortable to share.
- Talking Points
 - If a quick text is easier, let your child's teacher know or establish a routine with them.
- Family Liaisons- Are here to help
 - Ms. Pierre (Beethoven) bpierre@bostonpublicschools.org
 - Ms. Pena (O) jpena3@bostonpublicschools.org
- Community Field Coordinator/Attendance Lead at the O -
 - Ms. Burnett dburnett@bostonpublicschools.org
- Behavioral Health Team
 - Ms. St. James School Psychologist, at the Beethoven (astjames@bostonpublicschools.org)
 - Ms. Welch - School Social Worker at the O (kwelch@bostonpublicschools.org)
 - Ms. Alvarado - School Psychologist at the O (aarpino@bostonpublicschools.org)
 - Dr. Sheera - School Psychologist at the O (shefter@bostonpublicschools.org)

Questions?



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