

TIPS FOR BEGINNING A 'SOARING' SCHOOL YEAR!

This is the time of year that our students and families (and teachers) are trading the 'lazy, hazy days of summer' for the school spirit and backpack days. While kids are collecting their school supplies, moms and dads are sharpening their parenting skills of planning, organizing, persuading, patience, and positive attitudes to help their kid's transition into the new school year. Getting the school year off on the right foot is as important as getting the day started out on the 'right side of the bed!' After observing our students and teachers on the first day of school last Friday, it looks like this is going to be a year that Timberlin Creek is going to SOAR!!!

Here are a few tips that will keep all of us SOARING all year long:

** Getting up in the morning and getting enough sleep is always one of the biggest challenges of the new school year! Elementary age children need 9 - 11 hours of sleep each night to perform their best. If you have been on a different schedule during the summer months, it may take a week or two to reset the natural time cycle to an earlier wake up time.

**Plan an upbeat and unhurried morning routine that gets the family out of the house with all the necessary items and to school on time. Planning some special ritual or 'getting ready' routines can help the morning hassles! My husband's family still talks about the way Grandma Warren would rub their feet to wake them up to get them ready for "road work".

**As you take your child to the bus stop or school, put on your most confident and reassuring face! For younger children, goodbye's can be difficult. If your child is anxious about school, reassure them that their teacher is going to take care of them, and remember that this is an important step in your child's development. Devise a special 'special parting sign' and practice it with your child before school. Give a quick kiss, a hug, and a cheerful "See you this afternoon and I can't wait to hear about all of the fun things you've done in school today!", make sure your child is accompanied by one of our kind and caring school staff who will help them get to class, and walk away. (Feel free to walk right into our office so we can share additional ideas that have worked for others and reassure you that you have done the right thing!) Our teachers understand about first week jitters and it never takes long for kids to bond with their teacher.

**Establish a routine. Children (and adults) find comfort in routine. The more consistent you are at first, the quicker the routine is established. Be sure to include laying out the next day's outfit and the backpack is packed and ready to go by the door at night before school.

**Spend time thinking and planning with your child about special study spaces where quiet time can be spent doing the things that really matter like reading and homework.

**As you set up your family's routine, be sure to include at least 20 minutes of reading-for-pleasure time that is separate from homework time. Reading together as a family at any age builds basic 'survival skills' for the "information age" and strengthens family bonds.

****Maintain a regular bedtime to include some reading and snuggle time to wind down from a busy day.**

****Children find comfort in knowing that there is an open communication between the parent and teacher. Research had demonstrated that "kids feel a more trusting connection with the school as a whole, and tend to try harder both socially and academically" when they know that parents and teachers have regular discussions about home and school events. (school.familyeducation.com)**

****Minimize extracurricular activities. Don't plan a heavy after-school schedule. Children need unscheduled time to balance the structured school day. Ease into additional activities as you discover just how much your child can manage.**

****Expect some behavior changes as your child adjusts to the new school year. New beginnings can be stressful. Be gentle and understanding as you help your child understand and cope with these changes.**

Soaringly yours,
Mary Warren, School Counselor

p.s. Mrs. Sylvia Stanley and I are both excited to be back at Timberline Creek this year. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help your child and your family during the school year.