How can you help your child get ready to go back to school?

It's the end of summer and the reality of school is coming closer! For many children, the beginning of a new school year can bring on feelings of anxiety and stress. It's our job as parents to help ease the transition back into school. Backpacks, shiny notebooks, calculators, and markers are all fun things to help get our children excited for school. We as parents know that the excitement will only last a few days once those supplies are picked out. Many parents wonder how else they can help with their child's transition back to school. AWE Learning parents have come up with solutions that have helped their children through the years.

- **Homework routine:** Every child has some sort of back-to-school homework that is due the first week of school. Use this to your advantage to keep your child on a homework routine. Have your child choose a place they will use throughout the school year and set aside some time each day for your child to engage in an academic activity they enjoy. This will help ease the transition to real homework once the school year begins.

- **Designate a place where your kids will keep their school things:** Decide as a family where your children will leave their backpacks, lunch boxes, shoes, and jackets once they are home from school. This will help you as a parent to have everything in one spot for checking homework, papers needing to be signed, etc. It will also help minimize the madness in the morning.

- **Establish a bedtime & morning routine:** During the summer, most children go to bed later than usual making it hard to adjust when school starts. Based on your child's age and the hours they need for sleep, establish a "school bedtime" with your children. Begin a few weeks before school getting them used to unwinding and getting ready to sleep as close to that time as possible. Slowly work on getting closer to that bedtime, each night gets 15 minutes closer to that "bedtime" each night before the first day of school. During this period apply the same process to their "wake up" time. Have them get up 15 minutes each day closer to when they need to be up for school. Make sure they get up, get dressed, brush their teeth, and have breakfast. This will help establish your expectations of them for the start of school.

- **Update and purge your child's wardrobe:** The end of summer is the perfect time to purge your child's closet. Have your child create a donation pile; this is their time to communicate the clothing they are willing to wear and clothing they will not. This will help eliminate the stress of spending every morning rummaging through their closets for something your child can wear. The key is letting your child pick out some of the essential shoes, socks, pants, and T-shirts that they like. Start a habit of helping your child pick out their clothes the night before to eliminate the "clothes stress" in the morning before school.

- **Stock up on school supplies:** Check your school district website for your child's supply list. It's also a good idea to have these ahead of time and packed so your child can take them on their first day. This will help them feel prepared and ready. Items like a backpack, lunchbox, notebook, pencils, and erasers are essential to have for every child on their first day of school.

- **Electronics and the school year:** Think about your rules for electronics for the school year. Will they be able to watch TV while doing homework? Can they take their phones to their rooms at bedtime? Can they take their phones to school? How long are they allowed to play video games? Once you establish your rules discuss them with your child and stick to them.

The goal should be to take out the guesswork for your child and help them feel prepared to start the school year. In the meantime, enjoy the last of the warm summer days with your child. The new school year will be here before you know it.