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From: Aftan Tso
Kansas State Research and Extension
Family and Community Wellness Agent, Twin Creeks

Back to School Success

Parents- It's that time again. The craze of the summer activities is now the flurry of getting your kids back to school, whether they want to or not! Trading in swimsuits and summer fun for math books and homework is rarely an easy task. But as parents or the 'grownups' in your kid's lives, it's vitally important to help set your kids up for a healthy and successful school year.

- 1) Prioritize sleep- Setting and sticking to bedtimes and bedtime routines get their body and minds recharged. Lack of sleep leads to declined academic performance, behavior issues, and absenteeism. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has recommended that children aged 6–12 years should regularly sleep 9–12 hours per 24 hours and teenagers aged 13–18 years should sleep 8–10 hours per 24 hours. Start a routine that works for your family that can include family time, bath time, and reading/unwind time to get your children ready for sleep.
- 2) Proper nutrition and exercise- Kids need good fuel to power their brains and bodies. Starting your child off with a powerful breakfast that includes protein, complex starches, and fruit or vegetables have shown to help cognitive performance and keep them full until lunch. Balancing processed foods with fruits and vegetables can help make quick school night meals nutritionally sound. Encourage physical activity by playing, walking, or even dancing with your kid.
- 3) Be technology smart- With the new school year, it's a good time to come up with a game plan on screen time and device use. Limiting screens at least an hour before bed is recommended as screens can disrupt sleep cycles. Also, talk with your kids about appropriate social media use. Grownups can use apps such as Kaspersky Safe Kids, Bark, Mobicip can help monitor kid's phone and internet use to help keep them safe.
- 4) Physical AND Mental health- We know keeping our bodies healthy with good food, sleep, exercise is important. If your kid is sick, keep them home! It's their body's way of saying it's worn out and need a recharge. Check the school's handbook for sick policies. But also make sure your kid's mental health is a priority, too. Allow your child to talk about their day in a safe and non-judgmental way can help them process daily life. Playing with your kid or have a sit down family meal are also good ways to check in on them. If you see your child struggling, it's always okay to talk to your school counselor to get resources to help.

We wish everyone a great start to the new school year! Reach out to your local unit for a deeper dive on any of the topics mentioned.

Sources: CDC.gov; HealthyChildren.Org; Sleep: Want It Need It, Get It- KSRE