Back to SCHOOL

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FIVE WAYS TO HELP KIDS START THE SCHOOL YEAR STRONG

Brandpoint.

The beginning of the school year isn't just about getting backpacks and school supplies ready. It's also a time when parents check to make sure their children are ready for success in their next classroom.

According to a national survey of K-8 parents conducted by the parent organization Learning Heroes, parents are uneasy when it comes to raising their children, with peer pressure and their children's happiness at the top of their worries. In fact, three of five parents say it is more important their child be happy and not overly stressed than to do well academically.

When it comes to academics, nearly all parents – nine in 10 – believe their children are performing at or above their grade level. In reality, however, only about a third of American students are performing at the level they need to be to succeed in school.

"As a mother of two teen boys, this disconnect is a heartbreaking wake-up call," says Bibb Hubbard, founder of Learning Heroes. "Parents are all in when it comes to their children's happiness and success. owning the responsibility for how well their children perform in school. It's clear that most parents lack an accurate picture of their children's progress, as they aren't getting clear, understandable and actionable information they need to best support their children's learning and growth.'

To help parents get their kids ready to start the school year on the right foot,

tions they can take to help get a more accurate picture of their child's academic prog-

Start strong. As part of your back-toschool routine, help your child get ready for his or her new grade. You are the expert on your child. Check the Readiness Roadmap (https://bealearninghero.org/ readiness-roadmap/), which Learning Heroes designed after hearing from many parents, to know what's expected of your child this year and how to support your child at home. Review your child's annual state test results from last year. If you haven't received the results vet, ask your child's teacher or school. Look at this information and your child's end-of-year grades from last year to see where your child is doing well and where more support is needed.

Partner up. When you meet with your child's new teacher, bring your child's state test results from the past school year and ask what they mean for the year ahead. Ask your child what he or she is excited and nervous about and why, and let the teacher know. Share your goals and expectations for your child's learning and growth for this upcoming year. Find out what's expected of your child and what you can do at home to help.

Make it fun! You know your child best and you can help make learning enjoyable for him or her. Read together to discover topics that interest your child. Find math problems in everyday life and turn it into a division when cooking together or while grocery shopping.

Celebrate hard work. Our attitudes about learning - called "mindsets" - have an impact on how our children learn, how they feel about making mistakes and their self-confidence. Promote a "growth mindset" at home to help your child see that hard work is what leads to success. Congratulate your child for the hard work and effort put into completing a task. This will help your child feel less nervous about taking on new tasks or subjects.

Encourage life skills along the way. When it comes to your child's potential and happiness, focus on the whole picture. Strengths

The following article is provided by Learning Heroes offers parents five easy acgame. Practice subtraction, measuring and like being able to communicate, problem-solve, show patience and act independently will help your child in school and life. Talk openly with your child about how he or she is feeling and reacting to situations at school, on the playground and at

> Back to school is an important time for both kids and parents, and these five tips can help provide a strong kick-off to a successful school year. By taking actions big and small – every day to support your child's learning, you can be a learning hero. Share your advice, stories, and questions using #bealearninghero. For more tips, ideas and activities (in English and Spanish), visit bealearninghero.org/super5.

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Follow these five easy tips to help get kids ready to start the school year on the right foot.

GREAT BOOKS TO GET KIDS EXCITED FOR SCHOOL

The following article has been provided by tivity book for parents and kids. StatePoint.

As kids head back to school, you can help put them in a learning mindset by beefing up your home library.

Here are a few new books to consider that can make learning fun, as well as support STEAM education initiatives.

It's Elemental

Created in association with the Smithsonian Institute, "The Elements Book: A Visual Encyclopedia of the Periodic Table" is an easy-to-understand guide to the 118 chemical elements that make up our world.

Cataloged by type, each element's properties and atomic structure is explained. More than 1,000 full-color photographs showcase the natural forms of each element, as well as a wide range of unexpected everyday objects in which each is found. to make them relevant to a child's world. This guide brings the periodic table to life for children ages 9 and above.

Creative Coding

For kids ages 10 and over, "Coding Projects in Python" teaches those with some experience already how to build graphics, games and useful apps. All they need is a desktop or laptop, and an Internet connection to download Python 3.

Instructions illustrated with pixel art teach essential coding basics, like loops and conditionals, and outline seven fun projects, including a script that cracks secret codes, a quiz to challenge family and friends and a tic-tac-toe game. Once kids are feeling confident, they can creatively use the tips and tricks provided to personalize each project.

Coding is a sought-after skill that teaches kids how to think creatively, work collaboratively and reason systematically.

Kitchen Adventures

With easily prepared recipes, visual stepby-step instructions and charming designs, "Look I'm a Cook" is a great activity book for parents and little ones to share. From ice pops to chocolate muffins, more than 20 hands-on recipes for kids aged 3-6 will help children discover everyday science and cook up fun-filled food.

Scientific Discovery

More than 20 hands-on projects await kids aged 3-6 in "Look I'm a Scientist." From an iceberg animal rescue to stretchy slime, each sensory-friendly activity becomes an exciting science experiment that's easy to prepare and create. Visual step-by-step instructions make it a fun ac-

Fun Formations

Colorful and informative, "My Book of Rocks and Minerals" gives kids the expert knowledge they crave and will have them digging deep to discover all they can about rocks, minerals, gems, and fossils, from the deepest caves to outer space.

From crystals to glow-in-the-dark minerals, illuminating images provide a closer look at amazing geological formations. Kids can take their fascination one step further and use the catalog and activity pages to help them collect and group rocks to discover how different rock types fit into the world around them.

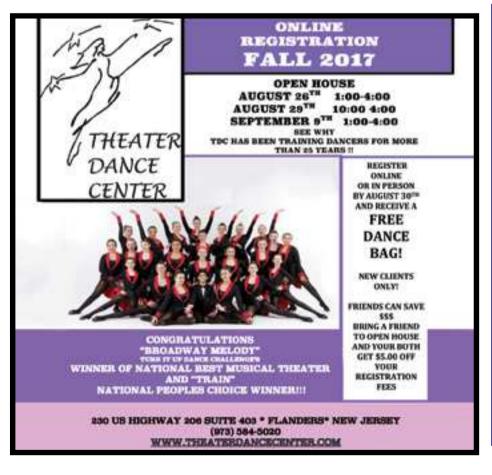
Applied Science

"Maker Lab" includes 28 projects and crafts requiring only household materials. From exploding volcanoes to race balloon rocket cars, photographs and facts detail the "why and "how" of each experiment using real-world examples.

Help make this school year a success by offering kids fun learning opportunities outside the classroom.



Get your kids back into the learning mindset by beefing up your home library with some great new titles.





FIVE CLEVER HACKS TO SIMPLIFY ANY Family's Morning Routine

The following article is provided by Brandpoint.

Getting the family out the door on time every morning is no small feat. Seemingly simple tasks like getting dressed, packing backpacks and making breakfast can quickly turn into chaos. Before you know it, you're running late and the kids haven't even eaten as you dash to the car.

Stop dreading the stressful start to the day and start taking control of your mornings. A few simple tips and tricks will turn the morning craze into smooth sailing. Plus, when you have a stress-free start, the rest of the day just seems to go

Select a week's worth of clothes Sunday

Instead of choosing outfits the night prior, supersize your time-saving efforts by doing this task just once on Sunday night. Involve kids in selecting their clothes for the week so they feel empowered in their choices. Then hang entire outfits in the closet or stack in one drawer dedicated to weekday

When mornings come, kids know exactly where to find the day's duds. Bonus: you don't have to worry about midweek laundry.

Create a routine and set alarms.

Create a morning routine and stick to it. For example, kids wake at 7 a.m., eat breakfast at 7:15 a.m., get dressed and ready at 7:30 a.m., then out the door by 8 a.m. And if the kids need to share a bathroom, set a daily bathroom schedule with alarms to keep kids on track and avoid arguments in the morning.

Get ready before waking up the kids.

Trying to ready yourself for the day while helping the kids is a recipe for disaster. This is why waking before the rest of the family really makes mornings hap-

Try getting up 30 minutes before the kids so you have time to get ready and enjoy a cup of coffee. You'll be fully awake, much happier and can focus on helping the kids stay on-task.

Create morning rules.

Just like you don't let kids eat dessert before dinner to ensure they eat well, set rules for the morning to keep things moving. For example, no TV until all morning tasks are completed. For teens, smartphones and other mobile devices must remain on the kitchen? Try this recipe for delicious over-



kitchen table until they are ready to go. Sundays = meal prep.

Make a week's worth of PB&Js on Sunday and put them in the freezer. This way lunch items are ready to go and the sandwiches will be thawed and ready to eat by lunchtime.

For breakfast, make it easy for kids by setting out shelf-stable items they can make themselves. New Jif(R) Peanut Butter and Naturally Flavored Cinnamon Spread keeps mornings interesting. Set out a jar by a loaf of bread and kids can quickly make a tasty sandwich they'll devour. Learn more at jif.com.

Want to up the ante for breakfast without spending any extra morning time in the night oats that can be made in the evening and customized for each family member.

PROTEIN POWER PACKED OVERNIGHT OATMEAL

Courtesy of WhipperBerry.com

1/2 cup old fashioned rolled-oats

½ cup vanilla yogurt

1/4 cup pecans

1/4 cup fresh blueberries and raspberries Large spoonful of Jif Peanut Butter and Naturally Flavored Cinnamon Spread (or Maple if you prefer)

1 to 11/2 cups milk (basically cover what's in your jar)

Optional:

1 teaspoon chia seeds

1 teaspoon vanilla extract 1 tablespoon honey

In a large jar, layer your ingredients starting with about a ½ cup of old fashioned rolled oats. Then add about a ½ cup of your favorite yogurt, your favorite nuts and fruit.

Next, add a spoonful of Jif Peanut Butter and Naturally Flavored Cinnamon Spread. If you want, add chia seeds and a drizzle of honey and vanilla extract. Cover with your favorite kind of milk. You can use cow. almond, coconut or soy milk. Gently stir your ingredients, top with a lid and place in the fridge overnight. In the morning, you'll have a jar full of yummy oatmeal ready and waiting for you. Choose to eat it cold or warm it up in the microwave.

FIVE EASY WAYS FAMILIES CAN GO GREEN When Packing School Lunches

The following article is provided by State- FreeLunches.org. Point.

While packing lunch for the kids can seem like a daily grind, you can use the task as an opportunity to help kids form great lifelong

Here are five small ways changing your lunch-making routine can have large, positive impacts on the environment, your wallet and your kids' health.

1. Pack with reusables. On average, a schoolage child with a lunch packed in single-serve disposable materials like plastic snack bags or juice boxes generates 67 pounds of waste per school year, which equates to 18,760 pounds of lunch waste for an average-size elementary school, according to the estimates of Waste Free Lunches, a non-profit organization.

save money in the process with reusable containers. Waste Free Lunches estimated that choosing only reusable containers can save you almost \$250 per person, per year. To learn more about reducing lunchtime waste on the household or community level, visit, Waste-

2. Choose Made in USA. The "3 Rs" — Reduce, Reuse and Recycle — are a great refrain for environmentalists, but to ensure your family's daily habits are minimally impacting the environment, consider adopting the simple act of choosing Made in USA products. This small change automatically reduces one's carbon footprint by a magnitude of 10, according to a recent study conducted by Nalgene Outdoor, which offers a vast variety of BPA- and BPS free reusable water and food containers in a myriad of colors and designs, ranging in size from 12-ounces to 48-ounces. You can help explain the significance of buying Made in USA products to kids by telling them it's like leaving a light on for 30 minutes vs. 3 minutes.

3. Buy food local. Without a doubt, the most Reduce your contribution to this waste and utrient-rich and often most cost-effective way to procure fresh produce is locally. Additionally, anything sourced within 100 miles of home has a significantly lower carbon footprint than something that has traveled

PLEASE SEE GREEN, PAGE 6



These five small ways changing your lunch-making routine can have large, positive impacts on the environment, your wallet and your kids' health.



Back-to-School Organization Tips FOR BUSY FAMILIES

The following article is provided by StatePoint.

The new school year brings hectic mornings, piles of homework, endless events, practices, games and school conferences. When you're a busy parent, dayto-day tasks can consume your thoughts and energy. Stay organized and sane by following these simple tips to handle the crush of the school year.

Centralize Communication

Communication is key when it comes to organization. Stay in sync with your family by using a digital calendar. Smartphone apps such as Hub allow multiple users to share to-do and shopping lists, appointments, commitments and more. In addition, many apps have messaging capabilities to ensure users can share specific details and instructions ("Bring treats for the holiday party Tuesday") and last-minute changes ("Grandma is picking up the kids today") with one or more family members.

Organization Station

If your family prefers a physical calendar, incorporate it into a complete "home command station" in an area everyone passes, like a nook in the kitchen or a corner in the family room. Build out the space as the central location for organization. Use chalkboard paint to create a reusable messaging wall for daily assignments and appointments. Include a shelf or use, place the frozen produce into and seed butters to provide pro-

cubby with an inbox and outbox so permission slips, bills and important documents don't get lost.

Make this station even more useful by adding a dedicated space for children to do homework. Include a desk, computer, school supplies and a bright desk lamp. Encourage success by posting recent "wins" nearby, like that aced spelling test or impressionist masterpiece. Utilize file cabinets, labeled folders or pouches to separate print materials and USB flash drives by subject, so homework can be handled with less stress.

Modify Meal Prep

Before heading to the market, map out meals for the week that share common ingredients, to increase efficiency and reduce waste: then create a shopping list packed with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Maintain a consistent supply of fresh, delicious produce with subscription boxes or community-supported agriculture membership.

Prep breakfasts and lunches the night before to save time in the morning and ensure your family consumes healthy, whole foods, versus pre-packaged convenience

Smoothies provide a nutritious breakfast or snack at home or on-the-go. Prepare and freeze individual servings of chopped fruits and vegetables in reseal-



Don't let day-to-day tasks drain your energy. Combat back-to-school stress by getting organized by making a few small changes that will pay huge dividends as the school year progresses.

a high-powered blender, such as tein, healthy fats, vitamins and the Vitamix A3300 Ascent Series blender, add almond milk, sov milk or water and blend on high until the desired consistency is reached.

For lunch, prep power-packed able bags. When you're ready to meals with items like almond

minerals. Mix unsalted, roasted almonds and canola oil in a high-powered blender to create homemade almond butter; or blend sunflower seeds, flaxseed, sesame seeds and sunflower oil for an allergy-friendly no-nut butter. Pair these delicious spreads with iam on whole-wheat bread for a twist on a traditional lunchbox favorite.

Staying organized is not easy. There might be occasional disarray, but making just a few small changes will help you reap the benefits of a more balanced life this back-to-school season.

GREEN: Make lunchtime more 'green' with a few simple steps

FROM PAGE 5

through hemispheres to reach your grocery store shelves. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), co-ops and farmers markets are popular ways to find local produce direct from farmers. Check out localharvest. org to find a program near you.

4. DIY grab-and-go snacks. Prepackaged snacks are often priced at a premium and rarely offer nutritious enrichment, but

with just a little prep work, you can create free reusable containers, such as those containers suggest "hand washing." Howyour own healthy options more affordably.

"I try to choose storage containers that are already pre-portioned so I know the portion that I'm packing," says Peggy O'Shea Kochenbach, a registered dietitian nutritionist. "Pack nutritious items like fruits, vegetables and nuts in clear containers in seek reusable items that can both sustain the pantry or refrigerator on Sunday, so that they are ready to 'grab and go' for the week."

For safety, store items in BPS- and BPA- reading shows that many reusable lunch GY STAR program.

from Nalgene Outdoor Products, which offers a line of reusable storage containers that are clear, ranging in size from 4-ounces to 16-ounces and that are also dishwash-

5. Green your clean-up. Parents should

ever, items that are dishwasher-safe can keep your household saner, cleaner and greener. For your family, cleaning is easypeasy; and for the environment, research shows a good dishwasher saves 3,870 gallons of water over its lifetime and uses less energy than conventional models, which kids' rough and tough daily activities, but helps reduce air pollution and combat globalso survive the dishwasher. Close label al climate change, according to the ENER-

EXPERTS SAY IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO TEACH Compassion And Empathy To Children

The following article is provided by Brandpoint.

The news is filled with articles about the opinions and attitudes of the millennial generation and now, Generation Z. But what about the youngest generation - youths 4-9 years old? These children are growing up in a time of unprecedented access to information, when civility, kindness and compassion have taken a back seat to bullying and violence. Experts say it is more important now than ever for parents to seek learning moments in which children can experience compassion and empathy.

The Jensen Project is a program designed to foster compassion, inspiration and courage in young people as a path to avoiding the bullying and sexual harassment prevalent on college campuses. The program examines the attitudes and opinions of young people with the goal of inspiring a gentler, kinder, more empathetic dimension in their lives.

Janet Jensen, founder of The Jensen Project, says, "Children are at their most vulnerable when they are forming their social skills. They are a reflection of what they see and hear around them. Parents, educators and media influencers need to take extra care to teach compassion and courage at an early age."

Recent research conducted by YouthBeat and commissioned by The Jensen Project, asked youths ages 4-9 if they thought the world would be a better place when they grow up. Forty-one percent said yes, while 38 percent felt the world would be the same or worse.

In an alarming statement about what stresses them the most, death and bullying each rose to the top third of concerns after



Children should learn empathy and compassion at an early age, according to The Jensen Project.

family and school issues.

critical issue at a younger age and must be addressed proactively if future generations will be able to reduce the incidents of harassment and sexual abuse in colleges and beyond.

Jensen offers the following recommendations for parents to raise children with compassion:

- Children learn by example, so let them join you in volunteer projects or encourage them to get involved in age-appropriate volunteering.
- · Actively engage them in conversation about behavior that is troubling to you, whether it be playground taunting or headlines in the news. Ask them why that behavior is hurtful.

• Inspire children to select friends of all Experts agree bullying is becoming a races, creeds and economic status - not just friends who look like them. Exposure to cross-cultural families and friends teaches tolerance and understanding.

· It's been said before, but is worth emphasizing, that monitoring a child's exposure to video games, live streaming and television time is one way to reduce exposure to bullying and violent behavior in entertainment.

Newscasts are filled with broadcasts of murders, robberies, fires, war, and political corruption. Small children are taking this in and processing it, along with their visions of superheroes. Today's youth are the long-term future of our country, Jensen says. Watching how the world influences their thinking at a young age is truly an investment in the future of the country.

"Adults must become agents for positive daily behaviors that can lead to longterm change," Jensen says. "The Jensen Project is committed to providing the inspirational resources to help make this happen."

For more information about The Jensen Project, go to www.thejensenproject.com.





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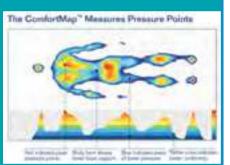
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