



SCHOOL'S BACK IN SESSION:

Back to School A+ Checklist!

With summer drawing to an end, it's time to get the kids ready to head back to school! Understandably, all the preparations can feel a bit overwhelming. But don't worry, we've got you covered with a back-to-school checklist guaranteed to keep you organized and stress-free!

✓ **Annual Physical.** Give your kids a healthy start to the school year by scheduling an appointment with their pediatrician. Doing so is the first and most important step to helping your children succeed. Make sure your kids are vaccinated and on track with growth and development for their age by speaking with their pediatrician.

✓ **Sports Physical.** If your children are involved in sports,

they may be required to submit authorization forms from their medical practitioner. If that is the case, be proactive and request the documentation as soon as possible to avoid having your kids waitlisted for their sport of choice.

✓ **Dental Checkup.** Children require preventative dental care to protect their developing teeth and gums. Regularly scheduled dental cleanings and exams can

prevent painful cavities and gingivitis from forming. Early detection and prevention yield twofold: it spares your child from pain and you from the cost of expensive dental procedures, even with insurance.

✓ **Vision Appointment.** Schedule an appointment with an optometrist to determine if your child requires glasses or is experiencing any eye issues. Blurry vision can




FOLLOW THE MOUSE:

We've hyperlinked resources you may want to access. Just hover and click!

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gravely impact your child’s academic performance. Be proactive and schedule that trip to the optometrist in advance of your child’s first day of school.


✓ **Vaccinations.** Protect your children from contracting infectious diseases such as RSV, influenza and the measles by getting them vaccinated. Reference the [CDC’s recommended vaccine](#) 

[schedule](#) to confirm your child’s vaccination record is up to date with posted guidelines.

✓ **Back to School Shopping.** Purchasing new clothes and school supplies can easily become a costly endeavor. First tip, mark your calendars to reflect any upcoming sales and consider buying items during the off season. Winter gear is inexpensive during the summer season. Likewise,

summer apparel prices can’t be beat during the winter and fall seasons. Second tip, consider thrifting. Often, second-hand items are as good as new and available at a fraction of the price. Third tip, seek hand-me-downs from close friends and relatives. Given that children experience unexpected growth spurts, procuring multiple clothing sources will spare your wallet and help with peace of mind.

Make sure your child is healthy and ready to take on the 2024-2025 school year! If you participate in the Cook County employee benefit plans for medical, dental, or vision, visit the insurance vendor sites to find a doctor and explore your benefits: [BCBSIL](#), [Guardian Dental](#), and [Davis Vision](#)!

You can also learn more about vaccines and preventative healthcare using your BCBSIL Resources, schedule an appointment with your child’s Primary Care Physician (PCP). If they do not have a PCP, you may call the Health Advocate number on your BCBSIL member ID card or [log on to Blue Access for MembersSM \(BAMSM\) bcbsil.com](#) and use the Provider Finder. This fast, easy-to-use tool improves members’ experience when searching for in-network healthcare providers. 

GET BACK ON TRACK

During the summer months, time can feel as if it moves at a slower and more relaxed pace. Heading back to school can therefore feel stressful for parents and children alike given the fast-paced schedule and increased number of activities during the academic year. During this time of transition, adequate sleep is of paramount importance.

Maybe your kids stay up late, sleep in each morning, and enjoy more screen time than when school is in session. With the first day of school fast-approaching, adjust your child’s bedtime schedule now to regulate their sleep hygiene and to ensure their optimum health.

Switching back to earlier bedtimes, earlier wake times, and reducing screen time can help you give your child every opportunity for success this school year. You can also introduce a bedtime ritual that will help your children wind down as bedtime nears in the evening. This could include things like brushing their teeth, washing their face, and changing into pajamas. Quietly reading in bed or having family story time are also great ideas.

Consider asking your child for input as you begin thinking of ways to prepare for the school year. They may surprise you with fun ideas to add to your family routine!

Age	Sleep Needed
3 to 5 years	10 to 13 hours
6 to 13 years	9 to 12 hours
14 to 17 years	8 to 10 hours

“HOW MUCH SLEEP DO KIDS NEED?”

Insufficient sleep can contribute to decreased brain development, learning problems, and an increased fluctuation of emotions. It can also contribute to weight management challenges, growth issues, and increased frequency of illnesses. Ensuring children get the proper amount of sleep for their age sets them up for success in and outside of the classroom.

Sleep needs vary by age, even among elementary aged children. Use this handy chart to help determine an appropriate bedtime for your child ahead of the school year.

