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Tips For Preparing Your Children

Going back to school after summer break can be difficult for kids, and it's especially hard for children with special needs. Removed from their comfort zones, parents of children with developmental disabilities can help to ease the transition by creating a consistent environment for their children, a process which starts at home in the weeks leading up to the first day of class.

Below are some tips about preparing children with developmental disabilities for back-to-school from Dr. Scott Barkin, executive director of Block Institute. Block Institute is a New York City educational facility dedicated to providing services to children and adults with special needs ranging from global development delays to cerebral palsy and many other conditions.

- Embrace the move from summer fun to a Monday-Friday routine and remind them that the fun doesn't stop completely – use a calendar to indicate times when he or she can put aside books during the coming months and play.
- Reduce stress levels and discomfort of returning to school by helping him or her select clothing for school, helping them pack (and get used to wearing) a book bag and reading books with them to help start the focus on school.
- Plan specific responsibilities – getting homework done on time and correctly and good marks on tests – and reward them with special treats. Doing so will ease the sense that responsibility is a burden.
- Do not underestimate the importance of setting schedules and creating routines. It will help with the overall adjustment of a return to school while empowering them in taking on responsibility.