

BACK TO SCHOOL: PREPARE YOUR CHILD

By Terri Phillips, MFT

It is difficult to think about the beginning of a new school year in August, but the time is very near. California feels like summer most of the time. The lazy days of the beach are about to be replaced by making lunches, a bedtime schedule, getting organized and off to school early in the morning. Also, let's not forget the dreaded homework!

Some children have an easier time in school than others and they may even welcome the beginning of a new year. Children with learning difficulties, social difficulties, focus issues, math or reading problems, or behavior problems may not be excited to return to school. It may feel like an overwhelming experience. Parents of these children may also feel overwhelmed at the task of negotiating the school process and the homework process that could take hours to complete.

The best way for parents, particularly parents of children with school difficulties, to manage the new school year is to be prepared. It's a great idea to begin preparation a couple of weeks before school is set to begin. Of course most families will get the new backpack and shoes to start the school year. It is also important to return to a schedule. Despite resistance from your children, begin a regular bed time and wake time to get ready for school. Spend some time each day, at least 20 mins, involved in a task like a math worksheet if they struggle in math or a math flashcard game to try to make it fun. Reading is also important to incorporate through both family reading together and silent reading time. If your child struggles and required a tutor last school year, you may want to get started with tutoring again a week or two before the start of the new school year so that they are prepared to begin. Regularly scheduled, nutritious meals and snacks also prepare your child to begin working every day at school. Daily exercise to get their bodies ready to be at their best is another way to prepare.

Neurofeedback is another way to prepare your child to begin the new school year. The brain needs to be functioning at its best in order for work performance and learning to occur. Neurofeedback is a non-invasive form of brain exercise performed in a professional therapist's office. The therapist will set specific goals with you and your child and connect the child with sensors to a video game system. Their brain will actually exercise by playing the video game without hand controllers. This session only takes about 20 mins and conditions the brain to perform at its peak level, making learning and focus in school easier tasks.

Remember, preparation for the new school year will make it easier for you and your child. Sometimes the return to school sneaks up on us. Don't let that happen in your family! Get ready today!

Terri Phillips is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist specializing in Neurofeedback located in Temecula. Call 909-730-0410 or visit www.terriphillipsmft.com for more information.