

The Genesis Therapy Center

SUMMER 2016

Transitioning Back to School

Brian Dryer, MSW, LCSW

Anticipate and address your child's anxiety. Talk with your children about new experiences and traditions, from using the potty at preschool to learning how to use a locker "in a playful and creative, role-playing way."

Manage your own anxiety. Maintain a positive attitude about summer ending. If you are nervous about school starting, then your child is certainly going to be nervous about school starting.

Ease back into scheduled days. To ease the transition, about a week before the first day of school, start their bedtime routine about 10 minutes earlier each night and wake them up 10 minutes earlier each morning, every day, until they're back on track.

Stay connected to nature. Make a habit of getting outside together after the school day ends, for as long as the warm weather lasts. When the air turns cold, hold a "camp-in" weekend evening.

Get back to healthy eating. The arrival of fall is a perfect time to teach your kids that family-focused healthy eating can be fun too. Be prepared with healthy snacks and meals when things get hectic, such as in the morning before school, when kids come home from school, and before dinner.

Seek out one-on-one time with your child every day. Challenge yourself to set aside just 15 minutes per day, per child, to enjoy a quiet activity together.

Battling the butterflies. To help ease back-to-school butterflies, try to transition kids into a consistent school-night routine a few weeks before school starts. Also make sure that they:

- get enough **sleep** (establish a reasonable bedtime so that they'll be well-rested and ready to learn in the morning),
- eat a healthy **breakfast** (they're more alert and do better in school if they eat a good breakfast every day),
- write down the need-to-know info to help them remember details such as their locker combination, what time classes and lunch start and end, their homeroom and classroom numbers, teachers' and/or bus drivers' names, etc.,
- use a wall calendar or personal planner to record when assignments are due, tests will be given, extracurricular practices and rehearsals will be held, etc., and
- have them organize and set out what they need the night before (homework and books should be put in their backpacks by the door and clothes should be laid out in their bedrooms).

Helping with homework. Love it or hate it, homework is a very important part of school. To help kids get back into the scholastic swing of things:

- Make sure there is a quiet place that is free of distractions to do **homework**,
- Don't let kids watch TV when doing homework or studying. Set rules for when homework and studying need to be done, and when the TV can be turned on and should be turned off. The less TV, the better, especially on school nights,

- If your kids are involved in social media, be sure to limit the time spent on these activities during homework time,
- Keep text messaging to a minimum to avoid frequent interruptions,
- Never do their homework or projects yourself. Instead, make it clear that you're always available to help or answer any questions, and
- Review homework assignments nightly, not necessarily to check up, but to make sure they understand everything.

Encourage kids to:

- develop good work habits from the get-go, like taking notes, writing down assignments, and turning in homework on time,
- take their time with schoolwork, and
- ask the teacher if they don't understand something.

To ensure kids get the most out of school, maintain an open channel of communication with the teachers by e-mailing or talking with them throughout the school year to discuss your kids' academic strengths as well as weaknesses.

In a National Center for Early Development and Learning project, more transition activities were associated with all of the following child outcomes at the beginning of kindergarten:

- Greater frustration tolerance
- Better social skills
- Fewer conduct problems
- Fewer learning problems
- More positive approaches to learning

Transition activities were most helpful for children from disadvantaged families

The Genesis Therapy
Center's

13th Annual

KidPower Benefit

Sunday, October 30, 2016

2 to 6pm at Gaelic Park in

Oak Forest

The Surprising Science of Happiness

Joleen Hartland, MS, LCPC

Harvard Psychologist Dan Gilbert is a speaker with Ted Talks. He discusses some surprising findings about happiness. The fact is studies have shown that a year after losing the use of their legs, and a year after winning the lotto, lottery winners and paraplegics are equally happy with their lives. It appears that winning or losing an election, gaining or losing a romantic partner, getting or not getting a promotion do not have a lasting impact on levels of happiness, according to numerous studies.

Dan Gilbert suggests this is because of our ability to synthesize happiness. Human beings have something that we might think of as a "psychological immune system." A system of cognitive processes, largely non-conscious cognitive processes, that help them change their views of the world, so that they can feel better about the worlds in which they find themselves.

He uses Jim Wright as an example. Jim Wright was chairman of the House of Representatives. He had to resign in disgrace after Newt Gingrich found out about a shady book deal he was involved in. He lost everything, all of his money and all of his power. What does he have to say all these years later? "I am so much better off physically, financially, mentally and in almost every other way."

Another example of this ability we have to transform our reality is that of Pete Best. He was the original

drummer for the Beatles. They sent him out for an errand and picked up Ringo on a tour. In a 1994 interview, Pete Best was interviewed and he insisted that he is far happier that he would have been with the Beatles.

From his review of many studies, he found that when we are confronted with very difficult situations, we have an amazing ability to accept it and even find ways to live well with it. Here is a link to the Ted Talk video.

http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy?language=en

Everything has its wonders, even
darkness and silence, and I learn,
whatever state I may be in, therein
to be content.

Helen Keller

We offer ongoing support groups for parents and ongoing social skills groups for children.

Please call 708-535-7320 for more information, locations and times.

The Genesis Therapy Center

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We're on the Web!

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