



## Back to School Tips

By the time mid-January comes around, for parents with school-aged children thoughts turn to the new school year. With the long summer break drawing to a close, parents naturally think of check lists and what needs to be done.

There's so much to remember! School books, new shoes, school bags, haircuts, bus and train timetables, lunch boxes and all things relating to education saturate the mind. But where to start? These few tips from Kidspot Australia may help [www.kidspot.com.au](http://www.kidspot.com.au)

### For first time parents

- Tell your kids that it's alright to feel nervous and worried on the first day of school
- Talk freely and regularly about starting school in the days before the BIG first day
- Encourage your kids to talk about what they're feeling. If there's something particular that they're nervous about, see if you can get them to talk about it
- Organise an expedition to the shops to buy their school material like stationery, socks, shoes and pencil cases and get them to help you write the list
- Have a dry run and organise a school day where they get up in the morning, put on their uniform, pack their bags and walk or drive to school
- Some kids worry about accessing their lunches, or maybe aren't used to bringing lunch from home, so eat a packed lunch at home
- Children love routines and when they start school their usual routine will change, so work with them to write up a daily routine and have a discussion on how the day will work

- If you know of other children who will be starting with your child, arrange for a couple of play dates during the holidays so they know other kids when they start school

### For students returning to school

- After a long free-and-easy summer break, it's understandable if a more seasoned student is reluctant to go back to school because of all those structures and rules
- There may be an unresolved issue from the previous year, so try and get your child to talk to you if you sense something is wrong
- Think of solutions and strategies to make going back to school easier for your child e.g. plan a weekend family outing at a favourite restaurant
- If your child has a more serious issue like bullying or learning difficulties, take up the issue with the school

And it's not only children who can suffer from first day nerves, mum and dad may also become anxious, particularly new parents. But so much gets down to the preparation. Be well prepared and the process will be a whole lot smoother. For example, attend transition days with your child and talk to the staff and other parents who are not new to the school about any concerns.