



## Challenges & Cures

Transitioning from the summer to school routine, is a big challenge for both parents and kids! To prevent and manage frustration, meltdowns, and stress, consider these suggestions.

**Challenge #1:** Sleeping in vs. early out-of-bed hours, is usually a shock! Rallying excitement about school can help. With season and time changes, the late sunrises can make getting up even harder!

**Cure #1:** Logically, earlier bedtimes are needed. Logistically, extra activities, homework, parent obligations, or kids procrastinating to stay up later, are difficult. Sleep specialists say that kids and teens need 9-11 hours of sleep to function well (for adults 7-9 hours). Parents must collect all electronics one hour before bedtime to avoid the blue light screen problem of sleep interference ([sleepfoundation.org](http://sleepfoundation.org)). Most kids love a bedtime "routine" which should be completed at the time of lights out! The physical necessities plus book reading, prayers, kisses and hugs give kids the signals and security that it's bedtime and tomorrow is a new day - Sweet dreams!

**Challenge #2:** Managing electronics is another necessity. Aside from the bedtime confiscation of all devices one hour before sleep, there are other considerations for parents.

**Cure #2:** It's not a bad idea to institute "device vacations" during the entire school week, with exceptions of laptops or chrome books needed for homework. Phones are only used for parent contact or emergencies. Social media and texting should be prohibited especially with younger children (11 and under). For middle school kids, set limits on the use of phones during school days. Texting, gaming, and social media are mostly time wasters and interfere with homework, activities, and family time. When people are present, be present! Parents must set this example!

**Challenge #3:** Have dinner together as a family as much as possible! Experts in family matters say that having relaxed dinners together on a regular basis enhances closeness, encourages conversation, increases self-esteem, increases academic performance, and opens doors of support for all family members ([thefamilydinnerproject.org](http://thefamilydinnerproject.org)).

**Cure #3:** Be a careful coordinator of the family schedule. Avoid overbooking activities. Plot the school calendar on your family wall calendar and planner. Group various commitments together. Many activities happen in the evenings, and compete with dinner! Parent activities should be considered so that family dinners are of top priority and importance. Dinner is a No Phone Zone for both kids and adults! Make clean-up a joint effort to have more time together.

**Challenge #4:** Eat well for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Another logical task, but not always easy!

**Cure #4:** Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day! Our brains need nutrition and a healthy breakfast starts the day much better than being hungry. Pack healthy lunches (the night before with an 'I love you' note!) with the kids' favorite foods so they eat! Dinner at home is usually healthier (and less expensive) than dinner out. No need for it to be elaborate and complicated to prepare. Some of the most healthy and delicious meals are quick to fix and quick to clean up. Plan ahead to keep your cupboards, freezer and refrigerator stocked with good food so that it is readily available.

**Challenge #5:** Organization is essential!

**Cure #5:** Designate homework spaces and times. Parents check it and sign off when needed. Pack homework, projects and clothing needed for the next day in the backpack, ready to go. Reserve a bankers box to accumulate stay-at-home papers. Pick out clothes for the following morning. Take showers the night before to save time in the sleepy morning (unless your child needs a wake-up shower). Check the family calendar for events of the day that may need a reminder. Make a morning routine for a smooth exit. Parents must get up on time to rally the kids and orchestrate the morning. On weekends catch up on straightening messy rooms so that the house feels more peaceful.

**Challenge #6:** Pray every day with your kids and for your family! Share a devotional verse as the day begins. This is #6 but is really the most important thing of all! I like the saying “The family that prays together, stays together!” So true because prayer is a powerful, bonding, connecting, personal act that binds us to each other and God!

**Cure #6:** Prayer can easily be left out in all of the busyness of life. Pray together at bedtime, in the morning, and during the day for each other. Just do it anytime and anywhere! The Word of God strengthens our trust in Him as He answers our prayers!

The message here is that **School is your Child’s Work** and parents are the Directors to make it all happen. Making school a priority makes the children a priority. A priority speaks of supreme importance, of things that matter and that are life changing.

I remember when my three children were under my roof, and thinking “these are the best days”. Looking back, they were extraordinary days in our lives and I’m glad I even realized it at the time! Time and years are slow, yet fast. Once the children are out of your nest, it will never again be like it is now in this season of life!

Diana Karpavage LPCC

September 2019

**“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 John 4**