

News Column – Donna Krug, District Director and Family & Consumer Science Agent – Cottonwood Extension District

Settling in to the School Routine

Earlier this week I was visiting with my daughter who has 3 school age kids. Her challenge of the day was to move the bedtime up as the first day of school approaches. That's right folks, school bells will be ringing soon. Families with kids adapted to a summer schedule filled with ball games, camp, swimming lessons and 4-H activities and now the schedule is about to change again. With the start of school, it is the perfect time to call a family meeting and get everyone on board with the new routine.

Research shows that kids ages 3 to 6 need ten to twelve hours of sleep each day. As youngsters begin pre-school or the early grades it is important to have a set bedtime with a routine that encourages success. Perhaps you want to target 8 p.m. as bedtime. If so you will want to begin the wind down process around 7. Perhaps a warm bath and bed time story would help your child to relax. Planning what will be worn the next day or eaten for breakfast also encourages a less hectic morning when the alarm goes off.

Whatever you want to adopt as a routine, now is a good time to start working toward your final goal. If the summer schedule has been lax, start moving the bedtime up a few minutes each day until your target is reached. That should help make the first day of school a success.

If you live close enough to school can your children safely walk or bike to school? Research shows that starting your day with some physical activity (i.e. walking to school) encourages better concentration and behavior in the classroom. If your schedule allows it, do a trial run with your child; either walking or biking on a safe route to the front door of the school.

Here's hoping your school year gets off to a great start!

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