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Top Ten Tips to Reduce the Stress and Strain

1 Review your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP)

In preparation for the new school year, arrange a meeting in early September with all the education and health professionals involved with your child's care. This will give you the opportunity to discuss the goals to be focused on for the new term and identify which strategies did and didn't work last year.

2 Organize your routine

It is important to set a number of rules and rituals in advance so that the return of school goes as smoothly as possible. In the morning you can plan a routine that incorporates what time your child gets up, how they get dressed, what they eat for breakfast and the route they take to school.

3 Get ready the night before

Get ready for the next day the night before. Decide which backpack they should use, what uniform they might need and whether they are having a packed lunch or a school lunch that day. A bedtime routine should be agreed on and followed from Sunday through to Thursday night.

4 Stock up on school supplies

A second set of school supplies should be kept at home. This will be invaluable for those times when your child loses his or her planner, pencil case, protractor, etc. during the school day.

5 Communication with the school

Determine who will be your regular school contact and how you will communicate with him or her, whether it's by phone, text or email. In this way, you can be quickly and regularly informed of any issues regarding your child.

6 After-school activities

Plan and organize a number of after-school activities that can build on your child's strengths or help with their weaknesses. For example, if your child would benefit from more physical activity, find out if sports or dance would help. Joining a chess club could help if they needed to improve their focus and information recall. This is also a great way to encourage them to build friendships with their peers.

7 Need help with homework?

It can take a child with ADHD three times as long to complete homework at home compared with working in a structured classroom setting. Plan with the school how best this situation can be handled. Consider a tutor to help your child with specific subjects.

8 Make a calendar together

Being able to foresee deadlines gives children a sense of control over their lives. Talk to your child about daily, weekly and monthly schedules and incorporate school, social and extra-curricular activities into the calendar. The more involvement your child has in the planning of the schedule and the greater the repetition of activities and schedules the more likely successful outcomes will occur.

9 Set goals together

Discuss with your child what might be achieved in this school year. Focus on strengths as well as areas that need improvement. Make the goals realistic and achievable and decide on some practical ways to reach them. Agree to review together with the school at half term intervals.

10 Review medication

If your child is on treatment, talk to his or her doctor a week or so before school starts, particularly if your child was on a medication break during the summer.

