



BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS FROM CI

START WITH SLEEP:

Sleep is so important! We know bedtime and early mornings can be challenging for many kiddos (and parents)! Here are a few tips to implement a couple weeks prior to school starting.

1. Establish or re-establish your nightly bedtime routine. We love books, deep breathing exercises, gentle yoga and sound machines.
2. Start the bedtime routine 10-15 minutes earlier each night until you've reached the ideal school night bedtime.
3. Similarly, start waking up your child 10-15 minutes earlier each morning until they are waking up at the preferred time for school.
4. With their specialized knowledge about routine development, regulation and sleep hygiene, OTs are another great resource for this area.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- CI's Bedtime Yoga [Printable](#)
- Morning Routine Visual [Chart](#)
- What Do I Need? Visual [Checklist](#)
- Feelings Wheel [Printable](#)

REVIEW ACCOMMODATIONS:

Does your child have an IEP or 504 plan in place? Below are a couple recommendations that may be helpful to you!

1. Get out your child's IEP or 504 plan and review accommodations and services they receive. Make note of any updates that need to be communicated with their team.
2. Reach out to your child's new teacher to remind them that your child has a IEP/504 plan and share any helpful accommodations.
3. It may help to confirm that members of your child's school team (ie. caseworker, special education teacher, special education assistants) are still on their team.
4. WI FACETS is a free, statewide resource available to support parents and caregivers of children who receive special education services.
5. CI also offers IEP support and other services to help you navigate this area of your child's care!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Get to Know Me! [Printable](#)
- WI FACETS [website](https://wifacets.org/), <https://wifacets.org/>

RECESS READINESS:

Recess can be hard for kiddos. Head to the school playground, and let your child start exploring the equipment. Being familiar with the playground can help ease worries and make recess successful.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- The Benefits of Physical Therapy for Your Child [Blog](#)

HIT THE BOOKS!

Spending time exploring books is a great way to facilitate conversations and discuss emotions.

1. Check out your local library for books about going back to school. There are so many great ones out there! We enjoy the "Twas the night before Kindergarten, First Grade, etc...." series.
2. Books about feelings can be helpful too! Use these books as tools to model how you are feeling about the upcoming school year. Ex: "I am so excited for you to meet your new teacher and classmates, but I'm also feeling a little sad that you won't be with me all day."
3. Remember to validate all your child's feelings; this is a big time for them and you as parents and caregivers!
4. You can even tell your child stories about your school years. This may help them feel a sense of connectedness over shared experiences.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- CI's Back-To-School Recommended [Booklist](#)

SHARE THE PLAN:

Review the plan for before and after school with your child. Even if the routine will be the same as last year, take a few minutes to talk about it again. Some kids will benefit from reviewing this plan for the first few days as they get used to their new routine.

1. We LOVE visual schedules! They can be simple clipart pictures or actual photos of your home and the school. What matters is that your child has a clear picture of what the beginning and end of their day will look like.
2. If your child is riding the bus, know the bus number or name and make sure your child knows what it is too. Consider printing out a photo of a bus and write in your child's bus number/name. Put the photo in your child's backpack, so they have an easy visual reference if they are nervous or unsure.
3. If your child will be walking to and from school, consider taking a couple practice walks there and back. It may be helpful to point out any intersections where crossing guards will be located.
4. If your child will be picked up by a parent or other caregiver decide on a meeting place at the end of the day and visit that spot a couple of times.

LUNCH LESSONS:

Lunchtime should be a well-deserved break for your child. Here's a few ideas to help keep the stress out of mealtime.

1. If you have access to a school lunch menu or calendar, have your child help make decisions about which day they would like school lunch or lunch from home.
2. If you are packing a lunch from home, consider sending at least 1-2 things that you know your child will eat. Don't stress about getting them to try new foods while they are adjusting to their new routine. There is comfort in familiarity. There will be plenty of opportunities to challenge their food repertoire after the first week of school is behind them.
3. Make sure your child can open their lunchbox and any other containers you may send. You can turn the "practice" into a game by adding stickers or other trinkets to the container for your child to find.
4. If your child has allergies or other dietary restrictions, don't hesitate to send a friendly reminder to their classroom teacher with any instructions or emergency plans.
5. Print out the lunch box notes we've created, and stick one in your child's lunch box for a midday surprise.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Lunch Box Notes [Printable](#)



For more information about therapy services at CI or how we can support your child during the upcoming school year visit, citherapies.com. All shared printables as well as helpful blog posts and podcast episodes can be found at citherapies.com/free-resources.