

## Parent eBulletin – *Bringing School Home* September 2010 edition



Simcoe County  
District School Board



The Simcoe County District School Board produces this e-bulletin to help parents support children on their journey of lifelong learning. We know positive connections between home and school support student achievement. In each edition you'll find practical tips and strategies to help your child achieve success in those important years of learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

**Bringing School Home** is available through the Simcoe County District School Board website ([www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)). As well, parents, guardians and other interested members of our school communities may subscribe through our website and have the bulletin e-mailed directly to their e-mail accounts (readers may also unsubscribe at any time). Please send your comments and feedback to: [webadmin@scdsb.on.ca](mailto:webadmin@scdsb.on.ca).

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### QUESTION OF THE MONTH: How can I help my child adjust to the new school year?



No matter what their age, the start of a new school year can be a stressful time for children and their parents. Fortunately, children and teens are extremely capable of coping with change and parents can help by providing a setting to foster resilience and encourage everyone to share their feelings about returning to school.

To make the transition to the classroom as smooth as possible, it is important to acknowledge your child's feelings of nervousness or anxiety and then help them manage their emotions. Often the fear of the unknown—classmates, new adults, the school building—is stressful for family members, whether it's the children hopping on the school bus or their parents who are waving goodbye.

#### Here are some back to school tips:

1. Talk to your child: Take time to talk to your children about going back to school. Ask them what they are feeling and let them know how you are feeling. Inquire as to what they liked about their previous school or grade and incorporate those positive thoughts into the new experience.
2. Empathize with your children: Remember, change can be difficult, but also exciting. Let your children know that you will be there to help them through the process. Nerves are normal, but remind your youngsters that experiences that are new or different are not always bad.
3. Be an active listener, focus on their feelings and encourage your children to face their fears.
4. Consider adjusting your own schedule so that you are home at the end of the school day for the first week or arrange your evenings so that you can give your child additional attention as needed.
5. Resolve to eat dinner together as a family at least a few nights a week. This is an excellent time to learn about what your child has been doing at school and to share ideas.

## The first week

*This is the time to establish routines that will make school days more enjoyable and set your child on the right course for success:*

- *Make lunches the night before school.* Older children should help or make their own. Give them the option to buy lunch in school if they prefer, and finances permit.
- *Set alarm clocks.* Have school-age children set their own alarm clocks to get up in the morning. Praise them for prompt response to morning schedules and bus pickups.
- *Leave plenty of extra time.* Make sure your child has plenty of time to get up, eat breakfast and get to school on time.

## Starting high school: helping your teenager adjust

Beginning high school can be a very exciting time for an adolescent. It can also be a challenging experience for some teens. For a student entering Grade 9 there are many social and physical changes to cope with. Teenagers may feel:

- lost and confused
- sad because they are missing an old school and old friends
- lonely and unhappy until new friends are made
- worried that he/she will not be able to cope with the new demands, will not "fit in" or will not live up to parental expectations

## How can parents help?

Parents can help ease their teen's transition pains by being open and understanding. Often, sharing parental experiences will help.

- Reassure your teenager that it is normal to feel confused and unsure at first and that most others will be feeling the same way.
- Help your teenager keep in touch with old friends and be welcoming to new friends.
- Create and support a homework routine.
- Be a good and supportive listener, but try not to give advice too quickly. Problems that young people can solve for themselves help to build confidence.
- Encourage your child to join school activities - a great way to make new friends.
- Do not forget that despite their age, teenagers still need parental affection, love and support.



Whether it is the first day of Junior Kindergarten, the start of Grade 12 or a new grade in between, even children who are eager to return to class must adjust to greater levels of activity and structure associated with school life.

The degree of adjustment depends on the child, but parents can help their children and the rest of the family manage the increased pace of life by planning ahead, being realistic and maintaining a positive attitude.

## When you need help

If you feel that the stress of the school year is too much for you and your child to handle on your own, seeking expert advice from a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, will help you better manage and cope.

## Sources

Canadian Mental Health Association – [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)  
National Association of School Psychologists - [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)  
Parent Information Center - [www.parentinformationcenter.org](http://www.parentinformationcenter.org)

## LINKS

We invite you to visit [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca) often for news, facts, school information, Board highlights and hundreds of other pages about Simcoe County's public education system.

Some useful links on the SCDSB public website include:

### **2010-2011 School Year Calendars**

The 2010-2011 school year calendars are available on the website at "Schools" --> "School Calendars". The calendars are available for printing in PDF format for kindergarten, elementary, secondary and modified school years. Click on <http://scdsb.on.ca/schools/school-calendars/> to view the calendars.

### **Transition to High School**

In an effort to retain more youth in secondary school and promote success for all students, the Ontario Ministry of Education implemented Phase III of the Student Success strategy. One main focus of this Phase is the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9. For more information on the transition, please visit: <http://scdsb.on.ca/student-street/student-success/transition-to-high-school/>

Our Internet surfing this month leads to three resources from the Ministry of Education:

- **abc123**

Simple Steps to Your Child's Success:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/eng/>

- **More Ways to Succeed in High School**

Grades 7, 8, 9 Transition

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/transition.html>

- **Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It**

A Guide for Parents of Elementary and Secondary Students (PDF document):

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.pdf>

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Make going back to school safe for everyone by staying alert at the wheel when driving around school buses. As parents and drivers we all have a role in keeping the children of our future safe."

~ Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Transportation

### **About the SCDSB**

*The Simcoe County District School Board is deeply committed to ensuring all learners have the opportunity to realize their dreams within a vibrant and successful public education system. We are very proud of our 50,000 students who are learning and achieving in more than 100 schools and seven adult learning centres throughout our urban and rural communities. Working with school communities, our dedicated and skilled staff members provide quality programs to help students develop lifelong learning skills in safe, caring environments. Our schools are located in the Huronia and Georgian Bay regions of south-central Ontario.*