

BREAKROOM BUZZ

August 2026

Getting a Fresh Start for a Great Year

As summer winds down and a new school year begins, August is the ideal time to ease back into routines that support success at home, at school, and in the community.

Try these simple tips to make the transition smoother for everyone:

- **Reset sleep schedules:** Begin moving bedtimes and wake-up times closer to the school-year routine.
- **Create a launch pad:** Designate a spot for backpacks, shoes, lunch boxes, and important papers.
- **Plan healthy meals and snacks:** Keep nutritious, grab-and-go options readily available.
- **Establish routines:** Maintain consistent schedules for homework, meals, activities, and bedtime to help children know what to expect.
- **Talk about expectations:** Discuss goals, concerns, and what everyone is looking forward to.
- **Keep learning fun:** Read together, explore new interests, and encourage curiosity.
- **Practice self-care:** Make time for physical activity, relaxation, and family connection.

A little preparation now can help ensure a smoother, more successful start to the school year for the whole family.

Source: [Tessa Hobbs-Curley](#), health and family educator, Illinois Extension.



Fueling the Body and Mind for a Healthy Day

Children's dietary needs and physical activity levels may change during the school year, especially if they participate in extracurricular sports or activities. Try these simple tips to help children stay healthy throughout the school year:

- **Physical activity:** Children and teens should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily, while young adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.
- **Brain breaks:** It is important for schools, teachers, and parents to help kids get moving throughout the day. This could include "brain breaks" between lessons and access to the playground before and after school.
- **Be a role model:** Demonstrate healthy habits by making better nutritional and physical activity choices for both adults and children.
- **Work together:** Include children when selecting fruits and vegetables and involve them in the kitchen while washing and cutting produce.
- **Prepare ahead:** Set aside time to meal plan and prep to make busy weeknights easier. Prepare healthy, quick, grab-and-go snacks.

Work together as a family to support shared health and nutrition goals.

Back-to-School Energy Bites

Ingredients:

- 1 can (15 ounces) Great Northern beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ cups peanut butter or sunflower seed butter (for an allergy-friendly option)
- 1 ½ cups quick-cooking oats

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
3. Divide the mixture into small bowls for the group.
4. Stir in your choice of chocolate chips, dried bananas, or apples to the energy balls.
5. Use a tablespoon to scoop and shape the mixture into balls and place them on a sheet of parchment paper.
6. Store leftover energy balls in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer.

Nutritional information per serving (two energy balls): 140 calories; 8 g fat; 110 mg sodium; 14 g carbohydrates; 3 g dietary fiber; 6 g proteins.



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