

Early Learning Parents' Pages

August 2017...



...is National Family Fun Month!

Learn how to beat the *Bedtime Blues*. Time for school and time to save. Post and tweet about your child's #1stDayVPK.

Have some August fun!

August is National Family Fun Month. School will start soon and your child will go back to the school routine.

Before that happens, take time this month to plan some special fun as a family. You don't have to plan a trip or go to an expensive theme park. Think of something special you can do each day as a family.

Take advantage of the warm nights and sit outside to look at stars together. You can visit the library to check out [children's books about stars and constellations](#) and learn more about stars. Look for [fireflies](#) (also known as lightning bugs) and try to catch some in a jar. Look closely at the fireflies and then let them go.

On a hot day have a water balloon fight or run through sprinklers in your yard. Soak sponges in water and toss them to each other. Look for community parks that have fountains for children to walk through and visit those parks.



Visit local museums, aquariums or zoos. Talk about the most interesting animals or insects you see. When you get home, ask your child to draw the ones she liked best.

Go on a picnic to a local park or have one in your own back yard. Let your child help you select or make sandwiches or snacks for the picnic.

Play hide and seek (inside or outside) or throw a Frisbee around.

Go to the beach and build a sand castle.

Look at old family photos and talk about the family members in the pictures.

Blow bubbles and chase them around. You can even [make your own bubbles](#).

Watch a movie together.

Have a cookout. Let your child choose what to cook or let him help prepare the food for the cookout.

Make S'mores together.



You can probably think of your family's favorite activities and let your family choose the ones they enjoy most. The time you spend together as a family will create special memories that will last a lifetime. The most important thing to remember is to make time to have fun together!



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Bedtime Blues

It is the end of a busy day. You are exhausted and need sleep, but your child has other ideas. She wants to play and sing and run around the house when it is time for bed. What can you do to get her to bed so you can get the rest you need? Rosalyn Ann Duffy in her book, *The Top Ten Parenting Problems*, cites Bedtime Blues as the fifth most troublesome problem for preschool parents. She suggests making a plan for bedtime that focuses on routines and persistence.

First, examine the problems that arise at bedtime. Is your child too excited to sleep, doesn't need to sleep or just wants to be with you instead of in her own bed? When you find the root of the problem, you can find a solution. If your child takes a long afternoon nap, she may not need to have a 7:30 or 8:00 bedtime even if you need this time for yourself.



Rosalyn Duffy suggests making a plan for bedtime and being prepared to follow through with the plan. This will require patience and persistence on your part because you and your child may be tired and irritable by the end of the day. Start the bedtime plan on the weekend or during a vacation when you are not rushed in the morning and both you and your child can sleep in if needed.



The bedtime plan should start with giving your child some time for active play before beginning the bedtime routine. Encourage her to first play outside or inside and engage in activities such as running, dancing, climbing, hopping and other large motor

activities. Then get her to settle down by playing a game or play with a toy that is quieter and calmer. Begin a bedtime routine at the same time every night. Decide ways to reconnect with your child each night, such as singing to her or telling her a story as you bathe her or while she is taking a bath. Ask her about her day and tell her something about your day. Bedtime routines help to diminish her resistance to going to bed and become a habit that she will look forward to each day. A typical bedtime routine may be taking a bath, putting on pajamas, brushing teeth, reading a book, getting a hug and getting tucked into bed.

Make a list of the bedtime routine and post it in her bedroom. You can let her check off each part of the routine as it is completed.



Bedtime Chart

- ☆ Pick Up My Things
- ☆ Brush My Teeth
- ☆ Get a Drink of Water
- ☆ Go to the Bathroom
- ☆ Wash My Hands
- ☆ Get my blanky & friends
- ☆ Say Goodnight to Everyone
- ☆ Get into Bed and Stay

The hardest part of the bedtime routine is to keep her in bed once you have tucked her in. She may get up to make sure you really meant what you said. Tell her you will



walk her back to bed if she gets up. When she gets out of bed, calmly ask her if she wants you to walk her back to bed or carry her back. Stay calm, caring and consistent, even when you are tired and

angry. It may take many times the first few nights to get her to stay in bed. The goal may be to just get her to stay in her room. It is okay if she sleeps on the floor or in a chair as long as she stays in the room. Just make sure she is safe.

Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z ...

Following your plan for connecting with your child and having a consistent bedtime routine will give you and your child a calmer evening and hopefully less stress and more rest.



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Time for school!

It is time for some children to start preschool, kindergarten or child care and for others to move to a new class or a new school. This transition to a new school, new teacher or going to a group setting for the first time can be emotionally upsetting for a young child or your family. Preparing the child for this transition makes him feel more secure and calm and helps him to be ready to take on this new situation.

Make sure your child is current on all immunizations and have current health records for him. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed an [Immunization Tracker](#) to record your child's immunizations, developmental milestones and growth from birth through 6 years old. There is also an [app to track your child's milestones](#) from age 2 months to 5 years with easy-to-use illustrated checklists. The app has tips from CDC for encouraging your child's development. It has information on what to do if you are concerned about your child's development. There are photos and videos in the app to illustrate each milestone and make it easy to track.

Contact your child's school for a list of supplies he may need and for information about the first day of school. Attend any meetings for families and take your child to school orientation if there is one. Learn about the school's drop-off and pick-up

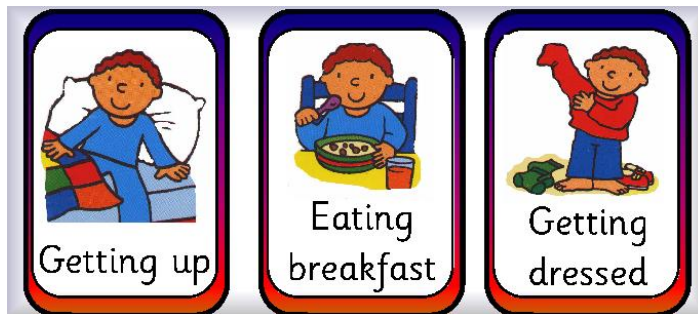


procedures before the first day. Talk to your child about what will happen on the first day of school and answer any questions he may have about lunch, what to do if he feels sick or sad, and reassure him that you will be there to pick him up or when he gets home on the bus.

Time to save!

Back to School Sales Tax Holiday

Aug. 4-6 is the 2017 Back to School Sales Tax Holiday for Florida. Families can save money by buying items they need for their children heading back to school during this time. To view a list of specific items visit the [Florida Department of Revenue website](#). Children's clothing, shoes and some accessories costing less than \$60, and school supplies costing \$15 or less per item are exempt from sales tax. You can purchase computers for personal or home use that cost \$750 or less tax-free during the tax holiday. Make your list for the school supplies and clothing your child needs and purchase these items during the Back to School Sales Tax Holiday to save money.



Start a few weeks ahead of time and read a book each day to your child about starting school or child care. PBS Parents has some suggestions for [books about starting school](#) to share with him. Ask him questions about school as you read the books, such as

“What do think will be the most fun at school?”

“How will you make new friends at school?”

“Is there anything that worries you about starting school?”

Let your child know that you will help him or talk with him about anything that he fears about school. Tell him about your experiences as a child starting school. Emphasize the fun you had and tell him about the friends you made at school.

For more ideas and tips to help support your child's first day of school, look for the [Back-to-School Activities](#) on the Office of Early Learning's website.

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My child is starting VPK!

Your child will soon be starting their very first day of voluntary prekindergarten (VPK). This is a huge milestone worth celebrating!

No doubt, you'll be taking a few pictures on your child's first day. You can make the occasion even more memorable by downloading and printing this special "My First Day of VPK" flyer.

- [Download in English](#) (PDF, 1.13 MB)
- [Descargar en Español](#) (PDF, 709 KB)

Then, use **#1stDayVPK** when posting your photos on social media. The Office of Early Learning will

be sharing **#1stDayVPK**-tagged pictures on our social media through the beginning of

September this 2017-2018 school year. You can follow along using **#1stDayVPK** on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



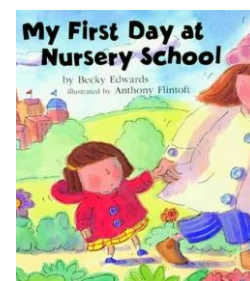
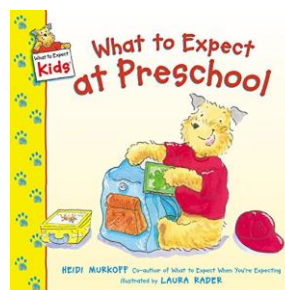
You can also use our special Facebook photo frame to commemorate your child's big day!

To add the frame, [click here](#) and search for "VPK." Adjust the frame to your liking and then click "Use as Profile Picture."



We are excited to see all of your **#1stDayVPK** pictures and we hope you and your family enjoy all the new adventures in this coming year!

Books about preschool



Coming in September...



- Dads, Take Your Child to School Day
- Grandparents Day
- International Literacy Day
- Baby Safety
- Family Meals are a big deal

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