



MENTAL MINUTES

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AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS



Back to School: It's that time of year again! Yes, anxiety is in the air as the first day of school draws nearer. The kids are wondering what their teachers will be like, will they have the same classes as their friends, and how the year ahead will be. Read our "Going Back to School" article to get some answers about how to cure the "back-to-school" jitters.

Back to School Transitions: An Important Mental Health Concern:

Starting a new school year can be scary, especially for anyone new to a school. Those concerned with mental health in schools can play important prevention and therapeutic roles by helping a school establish a welcoming program and ways to provide ongoing support for new students and for returning students. From the school's perspective, welcoming and providing supports for students, families, and school staff as a new school year begins is part and parcel of creating and maintaining a caring school climate.

Source: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/netexchange.aspx?tag=280>

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It's school time again! You're probably feeling excited and maybe a little sad that summer is over. Some kids feel nervous or a little scared on the first day of school because of all the new things: new teachers, new friends, and maybe even a new school. Luckily, these "new" worries only stick around for a little while. Let's find out more about going back to school.

The First Day

Most teachers kick off the school year by introducing themselves and talking about all the stuff you'll be doing that year. Some teachers give students a chance to tell something about themselves to the rest of the class. When teachers do the talking on the first day, they often go over classroom rules so you'll know what's allowed and what's not. Pay close attention so you'll know if you need to raise your hand to ask a question and what the rules are about visiting the restroom.

You might already know a lot of people in your classes on the first day. But it's a great day to make a new friend, so try to say hello to kids you know and new ones that you don't. Make the first move and you'll be glad you did and so will your new friend! Seeing friends you haven't seen in a while can make the first day a good one. You also can make the day feel special by wearing an outfit you like. Maybe you got a great T-shirt on vacation, or your new sneakers put a spring in your step. If you wear a uniform, you might wear a favorite watch or piece of jewelry to show your personal style.

It can make you feel good to be prepared and have all the supplies you need. Some schools distribute supply lists before the year begins, so you can come stocked up on pencils, folders, and whatever else you'll be needing. Once you've covered the basics, you might tuck an extra dollar or two in your backpack for an emergency (like forgetting your lunch money). Or maybe you'd like to bring along a book or magazine to read while you're on the bus.

Whatever you put in your backpack, make sure you pack it the night before. This prevents the morning panic when you can't find your homework or lunch box. Speaking of lunch, that's something else that can help you feel good at school - whether it's the first day or the 100th day. Pack it the night before if you don't like what's on the menu at the cafeteria. Try to include a variety of foods in your packed lunch, especially fruits and vegetables.

Get Oriented

The first day of school is your first chance to find your way around a new school, or learn the pathways to new classes in your old school. It's a lot to learn in one day, so don't be surprised if you need a reminder or two. It might help to write a few notes to yourself, so you'll remember the important stuff, like your locker combination and that lunch starts at 11:43, not 12:10. Before you know it, your fingers will fly as you open your locker and you won't have to check your notes to know what time lunch starts!

A Bad Start?

What if you **hate** school by the end of day one? Teachers recommend giving things some time to sort themselves out - once you know your way around the building and get adjusted to the new routine, you'll probably feel better. If those feelings don't fade, talk to your mom, dad, teacher, or school counselor.

Here are a few final tips for a fantastic first day:

- Get enough sleep.
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Try your best.
- Develop good work habits, like writing down your assignments and turning in your homework on time.
- Take your time with school work. If you don't understand something, ask the teacher.
- Keep a sense of humor. One teacher we know shows his new students a picture of himself graduating high school - a grinning ape in a red graduation cap and gown. This usually makes the kids laugh, and it's a good way to remind them that school is **fun!**

"Back to School" Transitions: An Important Mental Health Concern



Making The First Day Easier

- Remind your child that she is not the only student who is a bit uneasy about the first day of school. Teachers know that students are anxious and will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible.
- Point out the positive aspects of starting school: It will be fun. She'll see old friends and meet new ones. Refresh her memory about previous years, when she may have returned home after the first day with high spirits because she had a good time.
- Find another child in the neighborhood with whom your youngster can walk to school or ride with on the bus. If you feel it is appropriate, drive your child (or walk with her) to school and pick her up on the first day.

Source: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/netexchange.aspx?tag=280>

MENTAL MINUTE

Can you figure out what the animals are? (for example, "To run away or escape" could be a "flea")

1. Hair-control foam
2. Very exposed
3. Tellin' falsities
4. A lamenting cry
5. A dull person
6. A precious or loved one
7. First you get a parking ticket, then you get this
8. these make up a chain

Starting a new school year can be scary, especially for anyone new to a school. Those concerned with mental health in schools can play important prevention and therapeutic roles by helping a school establish a welcoming program and ways to provide ongoing support for new students and for returning students. From the school's perspective, welcoming and providing supports for students, families, and school staff as a new school year begins is part and parcel of creating and maintaining a caring school climate.

Back to school time often means changes for children and families: the first day of kindergarten or first grade; new preschools or child care settings; new classrooms and new teachers. Making smooth transitions between home, programs and schools can help children feel good about themselves and teach them to trust other adults and children. Helping children adapt to new situations can ease parents' minds and give them a chance to become involved in their children's education.

Transitions are exciting opportunities for children to learn and grow. Parents and early childhood professionals share a role in making children feel safe and secure as they move to new educational settings. Of course, such milestones in children's lives can cause anxiety, too. Strengthening the ties between programs and families will help create smooth transitions for adults and children both.

How parents can help:

- Be enthusiastic about the upcoming change. If you are excited and confident, your child will be, too.
- Prepare yourself. Take note of how your child reacts to separation. If possible, visit the new setting with your child. Introduce your child to the new teacher or early childhood professional in advance.
- Arrange a playdate with another child from the program, preferably one-on-one, so that your child will see a familiar face when she walks in.
- Start daily routines that will add to continuity. Let your child become involved with packing lunch or laying out clothes. Also, begin an earlier bedtime several weeks before.
- Put aside extra time, particularly on the first day, for chatting and commuting together. But remember not to prolong the good-bye. If the child whines or clings, staying will only make it harder.
- Always say good-bye to your child. Be firm, but friendly about separating. Never ridicule a child for crying. Instead, make supportive statements like, "it's hard to say good-bye."
- At the end of the work day, put aside your concerns and focus on being a parent.

How teachers or early childhood professionals can help:

- Make sure activities are developmentally appropriate for children. Interesting and challenging, but doable, activities will help children feel comfortable in their new setting.
- Make an effort to get to know each individual child as quickly as possible. Parents can provide information about children's likes, dislikes, and special interests.
- Welcome suggestions from families, particularly those of children with special needs. Parents can offer specific suggestions they have found useful for their own child, and advise on classroom set-up and modifications.
- Hold an orientation for children and parents. Small groups will make it easier for children to get to know each other.
- Show children around the new school or program, introducing them to other adults who are there to help them become acclimated.
- Create partnerships between pre-schools and elementary schools in the community. Meetings may focus on the sharing of ideas and concerns.
- Set up an area for photos of parents and family members that children may "visit" throughout the day. Also include items that reflect the cultural experience of all children to help promote a sense of mutual respect and understanding. Children, just like adults, need time to adjust to new people and situations. Experience can make transition a bit easier, but even with experience, change can still be stressful. Patience and understanding on the part of parents and teachers or caregivers will help children learn how to approach new situations with confidence -- a skill that will help them make successful transitions all through life."

Source: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/netexchange.aspx?tag=280>

5 Important Reasons Your Child Should Eat Breakfast



What if parents could give their children a magic pill in the morning to make them healthy, smart and well-behaved? This pill would undoubtedly be flying off the shelf of the local pharmacy.

While there is no such medication, there is something just as powerful: breakfast. Consumption of this morning meal is one of the most important things a child does all day. Over 30 years of credible research has proven that a healthy breakfast positively impacts brain function and energy level, which is extremely important for school-aged children.

Benefits of breakfast

The following are key reasons why breakfast should be made a priority for every child:

Breakfast equals better behavior

Children who skip breakfast are more tired, irritable, or restless by late morning. These symptoms lead to aggressive behavior that causes children to get in trouble in school. Children who regularly eat a morning meal have more energy, are less likely to exhibit aggressive behavior, and have a better attitude toward school.

Breakfast leads to higher test scores

A study published in 1998 in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* showed significantly higher math test scores after children ate breakfast. This and other research has clearly shown that children who consistently eat breakfast test higher in most academic areas. (See also Brain Food for Kids.)

Eating breakfast led to better class attendance

Children who eat breakfast are absent from school

fewer days. They also spend less time in the nurse's office complaining of stomach pains. Ironic as it may be, children who claim they don't eat breakfast due to a lack of time in the morning are tardy more often than those who take time for a morning meal.

More nutritious intake by eating breakfast

Breakfast eaters generally meet vitamin and mineral requirements for prevention of deficiencies. They consume more fiber, vitamin C, calcium and folic acid. Unfortunately, children who miss breakfast do not make up for lost nutrients later in the day.

Eating breakfast helps weight control

Eating breakfast helps to establish a normal eating pattern. Eating regular meals and snacks is a key to maintaining a healthy weight throughout life. Increasing childhood obesity is in part attributed to the disappearance of normal eating patterns in many of today's households.

Why do some children still resist breakfast?

Given the abundance of compelling information on the benefits of breakfast consumption, why does one out of eight school children start the day without eating breakfast? Some are not encouraged to do so by their parents, while others make arguments for avoiding breakfast. Some common arguments are lack of time, absence of hunger, and distaste for breakfast foods. No matter what the barrier, parents can and should find a way around them.

Creating healthy habits in your children

Here are some tips for parents on incorporating breakfast into their children's before-school routines:

- Prepare for school the night before by preparing the next day's clothes, lunch and backpack.

- Set the alarm for 15 minutes earlier to allow more time for breakfast.
- Say no to TV, video games and computers in the morning.
- Choose foods that require little preparation such as fresh and canned fruits, milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, hard-boiled eggs, whole grain cereals or instant oatmeal.
- Eat on the run with celery stuffed with peanut butter or cream cheese, dried fruits, string cheese, juice boxes, milk cartons, or breakfast bars.
- For those with little hunger in the morning, offer juice, milk or a fruit smoothie made with skim milk and fruit.
- For those who dislike breakfast foods, offer something non-traditional like cold pizza or leftover chicken.

Set a good example to your children: eat breakfast yourself

Children imitate the behavior of adults, so if they don't see their parents eating breakfast, they are likely to resist themselves. Children are not only more likely to eat breakfast themselves if they see their parents eating breakfast each morning, they are also more likely to develop healthier eating habits overall. Parents can encourage their children to eat breakfast by having them help plan the week's breakfast menu and making breakfast food readily available by storing them in low cabinets and having fresh fruit on the counter.

Source: <http://www.thedietchannel.com/5-Important-Reasons-Your-Child-Should-Eat-Breakfast.htm>

Recipe Round-Up:

Disappearing Zucchini Muffins

Ingredients

- 1 ½ c. shredded zucchini (about 2 small)
- 2 c. whole-grain pancake or biscuit mix
- 1 tsp. Cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 2 eggs
- ¾ c. brown sugar
- ¼ c. unsweetened applesauce
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- powdered sugar (enough to dust the muffins)

Directions

Wash zucchini and remove ends. Shred zucchini using largest holes on grater. Wrap grated zucchini in a couple of paper towels and squeeze to remove water. Measure 1 ½ cups of squeezed-dry zucchini. Preheat oven to 375° Fahrenheit. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. In a large bowl, mix whole-grain pancake mix (or biscuit mix) with spices. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, brown sugar, applesauce, and lemon juice. Fold the egg-sugar mixture and shredded zucchini into the pancake-spice mixture; do not overmix. Fill each muffin cup 2/3 full with batter. Bake 10-15 minutes or until golden. Remove muffins from tin (with help from your adult assistant) and cool on a wire rack. Sprinkle muffins with a dusting of powdered sugar.

Yield

12 muffins



Our sister agencies provide an extensive array of mental health services for both children and adults. "Our mission is to provide high-quality, easily accessible services for Georgians, focused on promoting mental and emotional well-being through personal and professional development, family preservation, resource coordination, and individualized treatment.

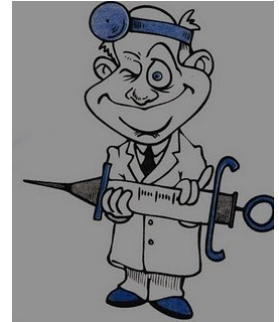
Self Care Corner: August Awareness Dates

August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM).

The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the life span, from infants to the elderly. August is the perfect time to remind family, friends, co-workers, and those in the community to catch up on their vaccinations. Parents are enrolling their children in school, students are entering college, and healthcare workers are preparing for the upcoming flu season.

Why are immunizations important?

Immunization is one of the most significant public health achievements of the 20th century. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated wild poliovirus in the United States, and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and other diseases. But despite these efforts, people in the U.S. still die from these and other vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccines offer safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. By staying up-to-date on the recommended vaccines, individuals can protect themselves, their families and friends and their communities from serious, life-threatening infections.



Who should be immunized?

Getting immunized is a lifelong, life-protecting community effort regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic background or country of origin. Recommended vaccinations begin soon after birth and continue throughout life. Being aware of the vaccines that are recommended for infants, children, adolescents, adults of all ages and seniors, and making sure that we receive these immunizations, are critical to protecting ourselves and our communities from disease.

When are immunizations given?

Because children are particularly vulnerable to infection, most vaccines are given during the first five to six years of life. Other immunizations are recommended during adolescent or adult years and, for certain vaccines, booster immunizations are recommended throughout life. Vaccines against certain diseases that may be encountered when traveling outside of the U.S. are recommended for travelers to specific regions of the world.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/default.htm>

The second week of August each year is recognized as National Health Center Week.

This week is dedicated to recognizing the service and contributions of Community, Migrant, Homeless and Public Housing Health Centers in providing access to affordable, high quality, cost-effective health care to medically vulnerable and underserved people in the U.S. This year's commemoration is special because 2010 also marks the 45th Anniversary of the creation of the Health Centers Program.

"Celebrating America's Health Centers: Turning the Vision into Reality" is the theme for National Health Center Week 2010. This theme highlights the 45 year record of Health Centers in providing affordable, high quality, cost-effective health care to all people, regardless of ability to pay. National Health Center Week 2010 also provides an opportunity to focus on the progress made towards fulfilling the goal of our "Access for All America" plan to provide a health care home to 30 million patients by 2015. Each year Health Center Week also sets aside three days to focus on special populations who are often left outside of the mainstream health care system. In 2010, Tuesday, August 10th will be observed as *Health Care in Public Housing Day*, followed by *Health Care for the Homeless Day* observed on Wednesday, August 11th, and *Farmworker Health Day* recognized on Thursday, August 12th.

America's Health Centers now serve over 20 million people (including 925,000 farmworkers and nearly 940,000 people who are homeless) in 7,000 communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam.

You are invited to join in a weeklong celebration, August 8th - 14th, to focus the public spotlight on America's Health Centers and their work to make sure that everyone who needs a health care home can have one at a health center.

Source: <http://www.healthcenterweek.org/>

Mental Minutes Solution

Answer

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Moose (Mousse) | 5. Boar (Bore) |
| 2. Bear (Bare) | 6. Deer (Dear) |
| 3. Lion (Lyn') | 7. Toad (Towed) |
| 4. Whale (Wail) | 8. Lynx (Links) |

Source: <http://www.braingle.com/brainteasers/teaser.php?op=2;id=23127;comm=0>



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