



There is a crisp feeling in the air, and it is still unbelievably dark when the morning alarm clock goes off. As you make your way to the kitchen to turn on the coffee maker you dodge the pile of backpacks and shoes that seem to have multiplied in size from the night before.

These signs can only mean one thing – it's back to school time again! If your summer was anything like mine, then you will agree that it went by all too fast. The thought of early mornings and making school lunches quickly reminds us, as parents, that gone are the lazy mornings of summer vacation.

Back to school may look a little different this year with the COVID-19 restrictions in place. Wearing a mask is now required, and as parents that means one more item we need to be sure we pack for our child to take on their way to catch the school bus. The daily to do list can often feel overwhelming. Here are a few simple tips for parents to make your back to school mornings a little easier:

- Set reasonable bedtimes for both you and your children. There is nothing worse than starting the day tired and cranky.
- Lay out their clothes the night before. If your children are old enough, this is a good habit for them to get into as well. This should help avoid the last minute search for the missing sock or the battle over wearing that favourite summer dress in the middle of January.
- Take a few minutes in the evening to make everyone's lunches – including your own.
- Have a designated area for everyone's backpack. Once homework and all school related paperwork is completed load up those backpacks and place them in their designated spot for the morning.
- Keep the television, computer, and video games turned off in the morning until everyone is ready. They can be a huge distraction in the morning and cause unnecessary chaos before 8 a.m.
- Make sure all homework is finished the night before. There is nothing more stressful to the morning routine than to be busy getting ready for school and work when someone pulls out a piece of uncompleted homework that is due that day.

By making a few simple changes to your schedule you can help keep those morning madness days to a minimum. Remember, it is all about being prepared – so set the coffee maker before you go to bed tonight and enjoy those few precious moments in the morning with your favourite cup of java and start your day on the right foot.

If you would like parenting support, information, or resources on children and youth, please contact our coordinator of Child and Youth Services at the GMFRC at 902-765-1494 ext 1812 or email at GMFRCchildyouth@gmail.com.