

RealTalk Podcast # 2: Focus on Fall Part 2

Welcome to RealTalk for Parents Podcast from The Parents Place Maryland this is our second part on Focus on the fall. RealTalk will bring you information, education and support because being a parent of a child with Special needs is an awesome and often challenging job.

Last time we talked about some tips on communicating with the school and focusing on having a great fall and maybe conducting some IEP meetings if you feel like there needs to be changes. Now we are going to talk about some things you can do at home to make things go smoothly.

One thing that's always a challenge is the bed time now that summer is over is getting back into those school routines. Depending on the age and number of children this may be something you can wing and fly by the seat of your pants (I have personal experience with that when I only had only one child) or the routine may need to be a more structured. You can have a schedule for snack time homework time and the sometimes dreaded and often extended bedtime. But I believe everyone parents included will benefit from good school routines.

Early bed times is a good start and this make take a week or two to get things moving. A few cranky morning of sleepy slow risers may help getting children in to bed earlier. Posting an am and PM schedule can also give a plan of attack. In my home This was totally taken on by my daughter now 12 but was 9 I believe when she typed and printed out the AM and PM schedule we posted it on everyone's door and the front door.

Picking out clothes the night before. This is a good opportunity to foster independence in your child even if your child wears a uniform by making sure everything is clean and prepped. This may help avoid the last minute ironing or discovering the pants are missing a button and the belt is missing or lost yet again....

Meal time prep and timing. I still struggle sometimes with making sure all the children eat breakfast. And deciding whether to buy or pack lunch. (* Add more). Having children pack their own lunch and pick out breakfast is very helpful in fostering Independence and to get their buy in. Which leads to the next tip fostering independence.

Nurturing independence is so critical. Many times we can hold back our children with some well-intentioned help. Also if there is more than one child there will be a baby of the family. I will introduce you to a new term “The professional Baby” This is reserved for the youngest child that has had parents and older siblings jump in to do everything for them and honestly may want to stay the baby. But children that play the baby at home have to play a different role in the classroom. In today’s classroom a lot is expected of our children to be prepared and ready to learn. Let your child organize their school supplies, teach them the importance of writing down their homework (legibly PLEASE- Oh boy more on hand writing later) and being responsible for going over their agenda’s with you nightly. Bring home the notebook. Yes your child can be very sneaky about not bringing home a very messy and unsightly note book and even through away not so stellar class work and quizzes that are supposed to come home. (Yep that one of my children again...you bet) But starting to get these items home early and often will help you get control before things get out of control.

Another helpful hint is creating a Launchpad: At home it’s important to designate a place for school things like back packs lunch boxes to avoid last minute scrambling in the morning. Also while it is still warm please locate the jackets and get more than one pair of the favorite tennis shoes. Shoes seem to play hide and seek at the most inopportune times. Posting reminders and lists on the door and on a central bulletin board can help avoid last minute missing supplies, signed permission slips and lunch money.

The Homework Zone: The time and place for Homework:

Making homework a part of your child’s everyday routine may help offset future homework power struggles

Establish a time and place for studying at home the kitchen table may work but keep in mind it has to work for your child. My eldest son only used the kitchen tables for projects or major assignments. All other homework was done on the floor of his bedroom.

Try to make it the same time every day and away from distractions especially the TV or other electronics.

As much as possible be available for homework time especially with younger children. You may be able to multitask and cook or read depending on the difficulty of the work and the temperament of your child. With my youngest he really needed me to sit right by him or across from him and not always for help but for support, praise and refocusing. We will be revisiting homework help in future podcasts.

So let's review: We are reestablishing our am and PM school routines' so the mornings go smoothly and our children are happy and prepared for school. We will nurture their independence allowing children to take developmentally appropriate responsibility for their school work and supplies. Create a launch pad so the back pack and lunch box have a home that is not on the floor at the front door or under the dining room table. And lastly we will set up the home work zone a regularly scheduled and designated homework place.

Thanks you for listening to today's podcast This is Yvette DeCosta. RealTalk for Parents is brought to you by the Parents Place of Maryland we educate, support and empowers parents.

RealTalk with for parents. Where we keep it real and keep it moving. Remember we're on that journey right along with you and it's a marathon not a sprint! See you next time.