

Back to school checklist

Prepare for busy drop-off lines, buses and school zones! From physical health to mental wellness, our experts share simple ways to keep little ones safe, healthy and thriving this school year.

Wellness

- **Schedule a check-up:** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends annual checkups from age 3 through 18.
- **Mental health:** Have open, honest chats with children about their concerns. Talk to your pediatrician.
- **Oral health:** Kids should visit the dentist every six months, brush twice a day for two minutes and floss daily.
- **Update child vaccinations:** Navigating vaccines can feel overwhelming. Your pediatrician is there to help.
- **Sport physicals:** Doctors can check for concerns from vision issues and asthma, to a lingering sprain or serious heart condition.

Healthy routines

- **Sleep:** Rest fuels a child's memory and concentration. Without consistent rest, children struggle to focus in class and retain what they learn. Build a bedtime routine.
- **Transportation safety:** Always wear a helmet. Drive slowly through school zones and watch for pedestrians. Ensure your child is in the correct car seat or booster for their age and size.
- **Nutritious meals:** Plan balanced breakfasts and lunches to keep energy levels stable throughout the day.
- **Screen time:** Children ages 8 to 18 in the United States spent an average of 7.5 hours a day using screens in 2025. Set clear daily limits for non-academic screen use.

Make a plan

- **Virtual care:** If your school district offers it, sign up for the Cook Children's School-Based Virtual Health Program.
- **Allergy action plan:** Provide updated emergency allergy plans and medications to the school nurse.
- **Medication management plan:** Submit required doctor authorization forms for any daily or emergency medications needed during school hours.

Health is a goal
we can all get behind.
Start checking your list off!

