



# *Work Smart Live Smart*

## **Stress Smart For A StressLess School Year**

**By**  
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September is fast approaching. Families will soon be back to the morning chaos, and possibly also to the fears about new teachers, new classmates, new courses and the many other things that can throw our children off course.

How can you help your children become stress smart? Beverly Beuermann-King, a stress and wellness specialist with Work Smart Live Smart offers 7 great strategies that can make this school year less stressful.

### **1. Anticipate And Problem Solve**

Children usually respond to problems in three ways – deny, act impulsively/aggressively or search for a solution. Parents can help children by reviewing possible situations beforehand. Start positively - talk about the great new things that your child will get to do this year. Talk about the process of meeting new friends - how did they have make them before? Discuss what to do if someone doesn't want to be your child's friend. Beuermann-King suggests that a parent's role, as a stress coach, is to help children find the appropriate strategies to address these types of difficulties.

### **2. Predictable Schedules**

Prepare for homework. When will it be done? Where will it be done? Guide children towards selecting a regular time and an appropriate place for learning. Place a calendar of all activities, events, and chores on a wall or fridge, so that the child can look ahead and know what to expect from those around them. "Predictability helps to relieve anxieties around separation or change", suggests Beuermann-King.

### **3. Proper Nutrition**

We all know that 'good energy in equals good energy out'. Skipping a meal or a poor meal, as well as insufficient water increases anxiety, moodiness, and causes a lack of concentration and headaches. Plan breakfast and lunch ideas together. Avoid caffeine and high sugar drinks and snacks. Add protein to breakfast choices.

### **4. Adequate Sleep**

It is easy for children to stay up late trying to get projects done but then be too tired to concentrate or remember information properly the next day. Establish a bedtime routine that allows children to get between 9-11 hours of sleep each night.

## 5. Regular Exercise

Exercise is important prior to school, during school and after school. Ask what they do at recess. Help them to find ways to burn up energy and get their body moving. Help them to enjoy the outdoors, as light and oxygen breaks are also important for good mental and physical health.

For non-competitive child adequate exercise may be difficult. Look at yoga or movement classes.

**Be aware of backpacks.** Keep the knapsack in proportion to the child. Encourage them to wear it properly and fit the straps to the height and size of the child. It should be no more than 10-15% of the child's weight.

## 6. Fun And Humour

According to one study, 5-year-old children laugh an average of 400 times per day. Adults are lucky to laugh 12-15 times a day. Help your child to maintain their sense of fun, as it is a strong stress coping skill. Fun and humour helps to keep life's difficulties in perspective and gives a break from their fears and frustrations.

Don't over-program evening activities and allow for plenty of free-play time. Make use of school activities such as group music lessons or sports activities in order to free up the after-school time. Free-play activities promote creativity and problem-solving abilities.

## 7. Strong Role Models and Caregiver Affection

Be aware of your child's self-talk, self-perception and beliefs. Counteract any negativity and self-doubt with positive affirmations and recounts of their abilities.

Remind them of their support circle. Who can they talk to, ask for help from, vent to, question and share with. Build a relationship based on love and trust. Say 'I love you' and 'I'm proud of you'. Play together, read with them, ask questions, and tell them stories of good or difficult situations that you have faced. But most of all – Take care of yourself, as it is a special gift that you can share with them.

Following these seven strategies will help to prepare your child to deal with the various stressful situations that they may face throughout the year. As well these strategies will ensure that they stay healthy and will have positive supports to guide them.

Stress and wellness specialist, **Beverly Beuermann-King** translates current research and best practices information into a realistic, accessible and practical approach through her dynamic stress and wellness workshops, on-line articles, e-newsletters and media interviews and through a collaboration called *Awakening The Workplace*. Visit [www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com](http://www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com) for more on Beverly and her wellness work.

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