Smooth sailing: adjusting to a new school, job, or routine

Fall can be a transition time for the whole family. Perhaps you have a new boss, your children have started attending a different school, or one has just left home. Maybe you have recently moved, and now have a longer commute to work. Perhaps changes at work have redefined your job description, or you are now doing the work of several people. Any new routine can trigger major adjustments to our daily lives, but it is also an exciting opportunity for everyone to learn and grow together. Here are some ways to ensure you and your family hit the ground running.

New job or work schedule:

- **Longer commute?** Save time by preparing breakfasts and lunches the night before. Create a weekly meal plan to avoid figuring out what is for dinner at 5pm. Scale back carpooling duty, or get your groceries delivered instead of making that twice-weekly trip.
- **Meet and greet.** Establishing a positive working relationship with your new colleagues will help you learn the company's culture and ease into your new position. Take advantage of after-work gatherings or group lunches to mingle with staff.
- **Speak up.** Ask questions if you are unsure about new procedures or equipment. Are break times and lunch hours the same for everyone? Do you need a parking permit for the lot? Can you occasionally work from home?

Looking for a new role but not quite there yet? If your ideas about where you would like to be are not fully formed, taking out a pen and a big sheet of paper is a great place to start. Make a mind map**,** jotting down keywords, images, and even names of people whose careers you admire. Once you have a general idea of where you would like to go, your pen-to-paper work can begin to take the form of lists: write down steps you need to take to get you where you would like to be. Keep returning to your career plan and fine-tuning it until you can see a concrete path that you can set off on.

Contact us for more information on career planning and redirection >

New school for the kids:

- **Children thrive on routine and schedules**, but adapting to change and being flexible is an important life lesson. Exposing your child to change early will help them handle it more effectively through-out their development.
- **Figure out what needs to change.** Can you all wake up at the same time, or do you need an extra half-hour? Can the children keep the same bedtimes, or do they need to get to sleep earlier because they will be getting up earlier? Discuss changes in after-school routines, extra-curricular activities and playtime as a family. When everyone is involved in the process, changes will be accepted more readily.
- **Get an early start.** Do not wait until the day before school begins to walk through new routines. Try some test runs beforehand. How long will it take to walk or drive to school? Can they ride their bikes? Encourage kids to prepare their homework, clothing and sports gear before they go to bed, rather than rush around in the morning.
- **Post it!** Put up a new calendar on the fridge, so everyone can get familiar with new schedules and routines.
- **Project positivity.** If you are anxious about your new routine, chances are your children will pick up on it and feel the same way. So be enthusiastic; if you are excited and confident, your kids will be too.
- **Plan play dates** in your local park so your child can make new friends. If your kids are older, consider making this the year they are old enough to stay at home alone after school.
- **Do not forget fun!** Set aside time one night a week or one weekend day for a family activity, preferably something active and outdoors. Ask kids for ideas and keep a list on the fridge so everyone has something to look forward to.

For additional assistance with change, stress and tips for building your resiliency, get in touch with your EFAP at workhealthlife.com or 1.866.833.7690.

If your child could use help with anxiety, adjusting to new routines, or self-confidence, our Children's Support Solutions can help. Learn more at childrensupportsolutions.com or 1.866.653.2397.