

Blog Article



The secret to your child's brain health – is in their backpack

The arrival of September after the summer holidays can be equal parts exciting and stressful for parents. Common stressors surround setting children up for success and can include back-to-school shopping for school supplies, and even preparation for new morning and after school routines.

But what if you took a different approach this year; an approach that could single-handedly encourage better achievement success, reduce stress and improve self-esteem?

The secret isn't a new and exciting smartphone app or breakfast smoothie – it's daily physical activity – and the research in our 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth states that physical activity's positive impact on brain health can help your child thrive in the classroom, on the school-grounds and with friends.



Packing for optimal brain health

Although you're not with your child all day to monitor their physical activity, a backpack stocked with items that encourage movement can go a long way towards benefiting their bodies, and their brains too. Here's a few items that might be helpful.



Activity tracker and comfy shoes

Let your child log the total amount of steps they take in a day and make a game out of getting healthy. You might be surprised by how excited they get about reaching their step goal each day. Ensure good footwear is worn or packed to maximize the activity and steps they take. Parents – why not join the fun to see who gets the most steps at the end of the day!

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Rubber Ball, Chalk or Skipping Rope

Almost 63 percent of children's free time is spent being sedentary, so send them to school with something to encourage spontaneous, active games with friends. Having a ball on hand can make the difference between playing actively with friends rather than staring at a screen.



Clothing

Weather is one barrier to active play, so make sure your child is ready for anything by packing a good jacket or warm sweater. Mitts and hats can also be a great accessory even in the spring and fall when temperatures can be unpredictable. Leave an extra pair in your child's backpack so they are always available.



Sun hat and sunscreen

Children need a sun hat and sunscreen to protect them from the rays. Make sure your children are prepared to take full advantage of the sun without having to worry about a nasty burn.



Helmet

Did you know that only 55% of children and youth spend 0-20 minutes in active transportation? And, active travellers get as much as 45 additional minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day? Wheeling or walking to and from school will quickly add up to a healthier lifestyle.

Back-to-school is a great time to rethink how to best set our children up for success. In resetting household – and school routines – it's helpful to consider that they need daily physical activity to reach their mental, emotional and intellectual potential. Small tactics, such as helping them pack a backpack with items that can encourage movement, can make a real (and active!) difference.

