

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

Fall a Time to Simplify and Nurture

DO YOU REMEMBER your feelings about the end of summer and the onset of fall? Going to bed earlier. Going school shopping. Wondering about the new teacher. Although children are glad to reconnect with friends, starting in a new class can feel like a steep learning curve. Like starting a new job, entering a new school room can challenge a child's feelings of competence and confidence. Parents have the difficult balancing act of holding a positive picture of their children's capabilities and paying attention to their level of stress.

Having to put forward a new, more mature self at school often makes children grumpier at home. They cry more easily and get angrier more quickly. Knowing that fall is hard doesn't mean we don't set limits on behavior, just that we notice stress and provide needed support. We don't make the mistake of thinking that there's something wrong—we all need time to adjust to transitions.

You can help children feel capable of meeting challenges by making sure they get lots of rest and good food. This is the time to monitor how much children are doing rather than signing them up for challenging extracurricular activities like competitive sports.

The best antidote to feeling overwhelmed, for adults and children, is not only simplifying our schedules but spending nurturing time together relaxing. We carry just the right flame to kindle our children's spirits just by enjoying their company.

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