



Back-to-School Checklist

Adriel

This BTS checklist goes far beyond the basics of school supplies, addressing emotional well-being, logistical concerns, and educational readiness. As a foster parent, your involvement can make a huge difference in your child's experience this school year.

School Supplies

- **Backpack** (for carrying books, supplies, and personal items)
- **Notebooks** (1-subject or 3-subject for different subjects)
- **Pens, Pencils, Erasers**
- **Highlighters & Markers**
- **Glue Sticks & Scissors**
- **Folders with Pockets** (for organizing homework, assignments)
- **Calculator** (if needed for specific grades)
- **Crayons, Colored Pencils, or Art Supplies** (for creative projects)
- **Water Bottle** (to stay hydrated throughout the day)
- **Lunch Box** (if bringing lunch from home)
- **Clothing** (Seasonal wardrobe, comfortable shoes, uniform if required)

Emotional and Mental Preparation

- **Talk About the Transition:** Have open conversations about what to expect and the excitement or concerns they might have about school. This helps foster emotional readiness.
- **Set Goals:** Discuss short-term academic or personal goals for the school year and encourage your foster children to express what they'd like to achieve.
- **Reassure and Support:** Provide encouragement, especially if they've changed schools or experienced a recent placement change. Reassure them that they are not alone.
- **Address Anxiety:** If your child shows signs of school anxiety, plan stress-relief techniques like deep breathing, relaxation activities, or a calm bedtime routine.
- **Meet the Teacher:** Arrange for a meeting with their new teacher or school staff before the first day, so they feel comfortable and safe in their new environment.



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Logistical Readiness

- **School Enrollment:** Ensure they are enrolled in the correct school and that all required documents (proof of address, medical records, etc.) are up to date.
- **Transportation Plans:** Confirm how your child will get to and from school (school bus, carpool, walking, etc.), and check routes for any changes.
- **Uniforms/Clothing:** Make sure they have the appropriate uniforms (if applicable), shoes, and weather-appropriate clothes for the school year. Consider purchasing a few extra pairs of socks, shoes, and jackets for the winter months.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Update the school with emergency contacts, including your own, caseworkers, and other trusted family members who may need to be contacted in case of emergency.
- **Alternate Caregivers:** Ensure your alternate caregivers have been [approved](#) by your foster care agency.
- **Health Forms:** Ensure all necessary medical forms (immunization records, doctor's note for any special conditions) are submitted to the school.
- **Lunch Options:** Plan for school lunches (whether packed at home or through a school program). If your child is picky about food, involve them in picking out what they want to eat.

Educational Support

- **Homework Station:** Create a quiet, organized area for homework with all the necessary supplies like pens, paper, and a well-lit workspace.
- **Academic Tools:** If necessary, arrange for any learning accommodations, such as tutoring, extra time for assignments, or special needs services.
- **Track Progress:** Regularly check in with your foster child's school about their academic progress, grades, and any challenges they might face.
- **After-School Programs:** Investigate after-school activities that your child might enjoy, whether they're academic, social, or sports-related.
- **Communication with School:** Establish communication with the school counselor, teacher, or social worker, especially if your child is transitioning to a new school or class.

For questions about foster care in Ohio, contact Adriel <https://www.adriel.org/foster-parent-inquiry-form/>



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Physical Health & Wellbeing

- **Physicals & Checkups:** Schedule a back-to-school checkup with the pediatrician to ensure your child's health is in good standing (vision and hearing tests, vaccinations).
- **Dental Checkup:** If needed, arrange a dental visit for a routine cleaning and checkup.
- **Mental Health:** If your child has a history of trauma or emotional challenges, ensure they have access to [counseling or therapy](#). Keep a list of mental health resources handy.
- **Exercise:** Encourage outdoor play or sports to stay physically active and reduce stress.
- **Sleep Schedule:** Help establish a regular bedtime routine to ensure they get enough sleep for optimal school performance.

Social & Family Engagement

- **Friendships:** Talk to your child about any friendships they want to maintain or make in the upcoming year. Encourage them to engage in social activities, whether in or outside of school.
- **Support from Relatives/Friends:** Involve trusted family or friends in your child's back-to-school preparation. A familiar face can offer extra reassurance and a sense of belonging.
- **Foster Family Network:** Connect with other foster families for support and to share tips. Having a network can be especially helpful when dealing with the challenges of transitions.
- **Community Resources:** Explore community programs that help foster children with school supplies, tutoring, or mentorship.

Personal & Comfort Items

- **Stuffed Animal or Comfort Object:** If your child has an object they rely on for comfort (such as a favorite stuffed animal or blanket), make sure they have it ready for school or after-school moments.
- **Personalized Items:** Consider personalizing their backpack or lunchbox with their name or favorite designs to make school feel more like "theirs" and boost their confidence.
- **Self-Care Kit:** Create a small "self-care" kit that they can use during the school day, with items like tissues, lip balm, or hand sanitizer, especially if they are feeling anxious about a new environment.

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