

How to Fight the Back-to-School Blues by Beth Levin Kelley, LPC

With the kids back in school, and summer fun and lack of structure just a memory, the fall season can be a difficult transition time. It's hard for everyone to adjust to being back in a routine. Parents have returned to taxi duty as they shuttle kids from one sport to another, balancing schedules and managing time. It may feel like your family kicks into action and everyone fragments into their different trajectories. Here are some simple reminders to help you keep your family balanced and reduce the stresses that come with maintaining cohesiveness in the family.

For Adults:

- Quality family time - PLAN IT, carve out the time for family dinner, and *ask open ended questions*. LISTEN to your children.
- Plan a family fun night once a month, play a board game, rent movies, make ice cream sundaes...
- Spend one-on-one time with your kids when possible.
- Slow it down a little, take time out to breath and look around. Don't worry, everything will get done.
- Date night with spouse, or friends – hire a babysitter.
- Un-plug once in awhile - Turn off TVs, cell phones, computers, for *everyone* in the family, if only for just an hour or two (especially during family time).
- Balance the schedule - let your kids have down time too. Don't over-do activities.

For Kids/Teens

- Get a good night's sleep
- Choose healthy snacks and keep them in your backpack or locker
- Exercise daily (or just get *outside* for a walk or bicycle ride)
- Set up a routine/schedule for homework time, chores and practice (sports, piano, dance, etc.)
- Save time for fun and relaxation
- Ask for what you need. if you are stressed out about something, tell your parents, or school counselors - they can help you.

Even though the lazy days of summer are over, the regular school year needn't be stressful. Just remember to keep things balanced, maintain communication and pay attention to your own - and family members' - needs.

Beth Levin Kelley, LPC, a graduate of Regis University, has been a therapist since 2001. She specializes in working with adolescents and individual adults. Beth's style of therapy is direct and engaging. She uses a variety of evidence-based techniques in working with clients who search for a deeper understanding of self or who want to work to create change in their lives. For more information about her practice, please visit her website at <http://www.counselinginddenver.com> or call 303-756-9052 x131