

Back to School



Best Tech for Back to School

Work from home isn't just for the gainfully employed anymore.

Students are also learning from home or even from abroad.

It's no surprise, then, that this year's hottest back-to-school tech lets your student take their learning on the road.

WEB CAMERAS AND ACCESSORIES

Remote school and work depends on a clear, bright web camera. Look for a model with high-definition streaming and a widescreen camera. Other perks to look for include automatic light correction and a high streaming rate. ZDNet.com recommends the Logitech C270 HD web camera, which comes in at just \$28.

And what's a web camera without an excellent light source? The \$69 Lume Cube puts your best face forward, be it for class or even a future job interview. It's adjustable from warm to cool, lasts 14 hours on a single charge and includes a frosted lens for improved light diffusion.

POWER UP

Expand your charging horizons with power strips with a cute factor, such as Anker's PowerExtend Cube. It includes two USB-A ports, one 30W USB-C socket and three AC outlets to help you keep all your gadgets and gizmos powered



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up. The cute little cube comes with a five-foot cable and weighs only nine ounces so it won't bog down your backpack.

Lightweight laptops may leave you short a port or two. Engadget recommends the Lention 4-in-1 USB-C hub that includes three USB-A ports and a USB-C connection. You

should be able to hook up mice, keyboards, thumb drives and more, as well as charge your USB-C devices. It runs about \$20.

When you've got to charge up more than your devices, look for the Nespresso Inissia Espresso machine that will save you time and money by making

your own espresso in situ rather than running to the local coffee shop. It can fit in small spaces and has sleek lines that look good anywhere. It retails for \$169.

CATCH SOME ZZS

When the espresso wears off, don the Manta sleep mask to

catch up on your rest. It features adjustable eye cups and an adjustable headband. You can also switch out the eye cups, Engadget says, for relief from migraines or some extra love for your skin. Grab an Amazon Echo Dot (around \$50) and ask Alexa to sing you to sleep.

Advice for Switching Schools

Summer break is prime time for families on the move. School is out and vacations are in, making it easy for people to put down some new roots.

If a new school is one of the new things on your list this summer, here's some tips on how to help your children adjust.

START THE CONVERSATION EARLY

Talk to your children as soon as you think about moving. Have open, honest conversations about what the move will mean for them. This should include their concerns as well as what they're excited about. When you can, reassure them and give them advice they can act on. Try to stay as positive as you can yourself, even when things get stressful as they inevitably do during any big life change. Try focusing on the opportunities this move presents rather than the drawbacks.

GIVE KIDS SOME AGENCY

A move feels out of control for everyone, so combat this anxiety by letting kids have an opportunity to make some choices and control some part of the process. You can start with small things, such as letting them pick out their new backpack and school supplies and move up to bigger deci-



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sions. If school choice is an option for your family, consider letting the children visit each school and have some input in the process.

Once your family has picked a new school, go for a visit before the first day. Let your children take a walk around,

meet staff and learn the grounds. Try to go when school is in session so they can get a feel for what it's like when campus is busy. Walk the new route to the school or the bus stop and try to establish a routine before the first day happens. If you can, try to incor-

porate routines from your children's previous school so that it feels familiar to them.

GET INVOLVED

Consider signing your child up for an extracurricular activity to meet some new friends. For younger children, meet up

with parents and set up some playdates so they can get acquainted with their new classmates ahead of time. If you have time in your schedule, get involved in school activities to help your family smoothly transition into your new community.

Getting Along with Teachers

Every school has teachers that are favorites, with students lining up to take their classes.

Other teachers may be more of a challenge to get along with. Sometimes, it's a personality clash between your student and the educator. Sometimes there is a stressful situation for either party outside of school that adds tension to the relationship. Either way, it's a tough situation, but it can be borne with these tips from Psychology Today.

WORK IT OUT

Putting up with a tough teacher is hard, but it can help students learn how to deal with challenging people early. Don't immediately ask for a schedule change. Instead, take steps to understand what's happening at school and start acting to help your child deal with it. Remember that your student's side of the story is just half of the story; the teacher has a whole other perspective that you should consider.

Encourage your student to set up a time to talk to the teacher. Practice having the conversation at home so they won't be as frightened and are set up to have a positive experience.

If having the student talk to the teacher doesn't work, you may have to escalate to a parent-teacher conference. Keep



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lines of communication open and don't be confrontational.

DOCUMENTATION IS KEY

Document every interaction either you or your student have with the teacher. Keep a record of calls, emails and conversations. If you have to

take the issue to school administrators, you can prove that you attempted to discuss the problem with the teacher.

TALKING TO ADMINISTRATORS

Psychology Today advises trying to work the problem out

first, but acknowledges that there are some instances where it's prudent to get administrators involved early. If something unethical or unprofessional is going on, that should be taken care of as soon as possible.

Of course, if you tried other

strategies and progress isn't being made to your satisfaction, take your documentation to administrators. Trying other strategies first can help your student feel empowered and let them learn to adjust to different personalities they may encounter in the future.

Choosing Electives

Once your student gets to middle school, they may be asked to pick electives — classes that aren't required by the school system, but that may enrich their education in school.

Your student may choose elective courses that are fun for them, that further their education toward their chosen career or that challenge them academically.

Electives can help students learn what their values are and what subjects really spark their interest. They can even get an idea of what their future career might be.

“Electives relate and build upon an interest and underscore who the student is and what they are about,” Jenn Curtis, founder of FutureWise Consulting and co-author of “The Parent Compass” told U.S. News & World Report. These courses are an opportunity for exploration and help bolster students' college applications. Students can also choose electives with honors courses to boost their GPA and pique their interest in more advanced subjects.

So what are mom and dad to do? “Have a seat,” Cindy Chanin, founder of Rainbow EDU Consulting told U.S. News & World Report. Students need the freedom to explore both



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themselves and their academic possibilities through elective courses.

What parents can do is to help their student understand the requirements around electives and the changes in those requirements from year to year. Look through the information together and talk about what excites them about each

course. Encourage your student to ask friends and classmates about their electives. Students can and should take the lead in this process, exploring for themselves what they like and don't like.

Some examples of electives offered around the country include foreign languages such as Japanese, Chinese, German

and Korean; human rights studies; arts courses such as sculpture, symphonic band, stage design, digital art, concert band and more; competitive speech and debate; STEM physics; broadcast media; film and television production and others.

In college, electives serve much the same purpose, allowing the student to explore

interests outside of their major or to aid in picking a major. College students can take advantage of advice from their advisor, who can help them choose courses that both interest them and can help fulfill their academic requirements. Find a balance and avoid overloading the schedule with academic classes.

Lunch Ideas that Make the Grade

Get ready to make some other lunch boxes jealous with these A+ lunch ideas.

PICKLE REUBENS

Fewer carbs, same crunch. Recipe is from Delish.

Ingredients

- 3 large pickles
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- 1 tablespoon relish
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 pound corned beef, thinly sliced
- 3 slices Swiss cheese

Directions

1. Slice the pickles in half lengthwise. Using a small spoon, scoop out the seeds.
2. Make the sauce by whisking together mayonnaise, ketchup, relish and Worcestershire sauce in a small bowl.
3. Spread the sauce on a pickle half, then top with corned beef and cheese. Top with the other half of the pickle and secure with a toothpick.

STOVETOP WHITE MACARONI AND CHEESE

Yes, please. Recipe is from Jehan Can Cook.

Ingredients

- 16 ounces box of macaroni, cooked according to package directions
- 8 ounces shredded sharp white cheddar
- 8 ounces shredded provolone cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 tablespoons Butter

- 3 tablespoons Flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Ingredients

1. Melt butter over low heat, then stir in flour to combine. Cook for a minute, stirring frequently, then add the milk slowly and whisk until

smooth. Cook over low heat until it thickens, about 5 minutes.

2. Add the spices and salt, then the cheeses and stir until melted. Add the pasta and cook for a minute, then remove from the heat. Allow the macaroni to sit for five minutes to thicken before serving.

TURKEY FLORENTINE SANDWICHES

Jazz up a boring turkey sand-

wich for a lunchtime treat. Recipe is from Taste of Home.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 ounces sliced turkey breast
- 2 slices part-skim mozzarella
- 4 slices whole wheat bread
- Cooking spray

Directions

1. Sauté mushrooms in oil until tender. Add the spinach and the garlic and cook for one minute.
2. Layer the spinach, turkey and cheese on two bread slices, then top with the remaining bread. Spritz the outsides of the sandwiches with cooking spray and cook on a panini maker or indoor grill for 4-5 minutes, or until the bread is browned and the cheese is melted.



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Dealing with the Feelings

From the first day of kindergarten to the first day of college, first days of school are full of emotions for parents and students alike.

How you and your student handle those feelings is a lesson as big as the ones the teacher will be conducting later that day.

FEEDING OFF EACH OTHER

It's important to remember that children and parents respond to each other. Children, especially, the Erikson Institute says. "Create calm by being calm," says Margret Nickels, director of the Center for Children and Families at Erikson Institute. She suggests that parents manage their stress by talking about their feelings with their friends, partners and even the student's new teacher. Reflect on your own worries in this situation and realize when you're projecting your own fears into your child's life. Consider how they've managed other challenges and remember that these challenges are an opportunity for children (and parents) to grow and develop.

SEPARATE QUICKLY

Natalie Beach, a kindergarten teacher in Tennessee, told PBS that, in her experience, it goes better if parents and kids



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separate quickly on the first day. Beach says this allows the children to build confidence and shorten emotions. Teachers, offer to call the parents later and tell them how their child is doing if it helps. Some teachers may opt to use classroom communication apps. Parents, make sure you

have the login handy and that the app is working for you from the first day so that you don't miss a thing.

COPING TIPS

Even into middle and high school, the first day is full of jitters. Help your student to feel their best by letting them

pick out an outfit that boosts their confidence. If their school requires uniforms, let them choose new accessories to make their look their own. Help them check that they have all the supplies they need and have everything ready to make their first day the best day. That includes eating a

healthy breakfast and lunch and staying hydrated.

Nemours Health recommends that students at all levels get a good night's sleep, try their best and establish good work habits, all important steps to setting the tone for a great school year, starting from Day 1.

Benefits of Extracurriculars

School activities can build teamwork, communication, relationship skills and establish a sense of belonging.

Studies show that students who participate in extracurricular activities have higher levels of academic achievement, greater character development and social development and a greater sense of the importance of community involvement. Keep reading to find tips on choosing the right extracurricular activities for your student.

EXPLORE THE OPTIONS

Just like with elective classes, extracurricular activities are an opportunity for students to learn more about themselves. This can be an activity that they're already good at or one that they want to learn more about. Encourage children to use extracurricular activities to try new things, particularly ones they won't have an opportunity to do elsewhere or at any other time. Make sure the activities are challenging, but complement the activities they already participate in. Push boundaries and discover even more about yourself.

LOOK FOR LEADERSHIP

Try to choose activities that will offer you a chance to be a leader. Admissions officers and future employers alike



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love to see strong leadership skills, and here's where those skills start to develop. Find a group of students and activities that feel comfortable for you and position yourself to take a leadership role as you get more involved. You can also look for organizations that complement your academic or career interests, such as a future engineers club or a stu-

dent branch of a professional organization.

CONSIDER STARTING A CLUB

If you can't find a club that interests you, consider starting one. Most of your school's extracurricular activities started with a small group of like-minded students, and there's no reason you can't do

the same. Starting a club now can be a great experience and looks good on your college admissions paperwork. Some schools may have funds to help you get started.

Just be careful of overloading yourself. Get a faculty member involved early so that they can help you balance your academic load with your activities.

HAVE FUN

Remember that, first and foremost, the point of extracurricular activities is to have fun. If at any point the activity becomes more work for you or adversely affects your mental and physical health in any way, ask for help from a trusted adult or teacher. Don't let it consume you and make sure to keep your life balanced.