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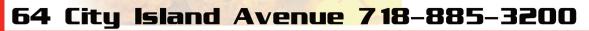
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- 1. Ease into school-year routines. Many children thrive on routines. Prep for the transition to a school-day schedule as early as possible by slowly moving your children's bedtimes up a little each evening. You should also establish school-year breakfast, lunch and dinner routines to help children adjust to regular mealtimes.
- 2. Take a trial run and figure out what hiccups need addressing. Ask your children's school if you can take an after-hours tour to increase familiarity and practice your routine. According to KinderCare's Parent Confidence Report, 61% of parents believe being a parent means constantly thinking about child care gaps, so now is the time to make before- and after-school care arrangements and discuss them with your children. Help ease their nerves by making sure they practice the little things like opening and closing lunchboxes, water bottles and backpacks, and finding their drop off and pick up locations then adjust as needed to make sure they feel confident in each of the tasks.
- **3.** Start back-to-school conversations at home. Children sometimes experience big feelings, and they may not know how to explain what they're experiencing. Whether it's excitement, jitters or anxiety around the unknown, having open conversations at home about school can give children a comfortable space to share what they feel and help quell their nerves. This is also a good time to gently remind your children about kindness and acceptance of others. During the school year, monitor your children's behavior to better understand how they may be feeling.
- **4.** Build strong home and school partnerships. One of the best things you can do for your children is give them the resources they need for success then support them along the way. One way to do this is by building partnerships with your children's teachers to create a strong foundation for the entire school year. Whether it's joining the local parent group at school, downloading a classroom app, following your children's school social media pages or sending an informal "getting to know you" email to your children's teachers, consistent and effective communication is often beneficial when you face challenges or have questions down the road.
- 5. Set school-year goals. These don't have to be formal; they can be impactful and fun, too. This may help your children understand what they're working toward. Maybe they want to try a new sport or learn a musical instrument. Maybe they would like to increase their math competencies by a letter grade or demonstrate more patience while learning new things. Make a mental note to continuously revisit these goals throughout the year to celebrate progress and growth. Watch for ways you can help them accomplish these objectives with support from counselors, coaches and instructors as well as at home.



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The Importance of Mental Wellness for a Healthy Heart and Brain



(Family Features) Research shows anxiety, stress and depression can have a negative impact on physical health and may even increase the risk for heart disease and stroke.

In fact, the American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health, identified a strong interconnection between the mind, heart and body in its scientific statement, "Psychological Health, Well-Being and the Mind-Heart-Body Connection."

"Research has clearly demonstrated negative psychological factors, personality traits and mental health disorders can negatively impact cardiovascular health," said volunteer chair of the statement writing committee Glenn N. Levine, M.D., FAHA, master clinician and professor of medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and chief of the cardiology section at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. "The body's biological reaction to stress, anxiety and other types of poor mental health can manifest physically through an irregular heart rate or rhythm, increased blood pressure and inflammation throughout the body. Negative psychological health is also associated with health behaviors that are linked to an increased risk for heart disease and stroke, such as smoking, lower levels of physical activity, unhealthy diet, being overweight and not taking medications as prescribed."

Studies have found some people, including people of color, may face a greater risk of poor health outcomes due to chronic stress, depression and anxiety linked to psychosocial stressors, particularly those related to social and economic inequality, discrimination, systemic racism and other societal factors. A study published in the "Journal of the American Heart Association" found U.S. adults who reported feeling highly discriminated against at work had an increased risk of developing high blood pressure compared to those who reported low discrimination at work.

"Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being," Levine said. "It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Practicing mindfulness in all forms allows one to be more aware of and have more control over emotional responses to the experiences of daily life."

Consider these tips from Levine to improve your mind-heart-body connection:

Practice meditation regularly. Even simple actions such as communing with nature or sitting quietly and focusing on your breath can have a positive impact.

Get plenty of good, restful sleep. Set a regular bedtime, turn off or dim electronics as bedtime approaches and form a wakeup routine.

Make connections and stay in touch. Reach out and connect regularly with family and friends, or engage in activities to meet new people.

- Practice mindful movement. There are many types of gentle mindful practices like yoga and Tai chi that can be done about anywhere with no special equipment to help ease your soul and muscles.
- Spend time with your furry friend. Companion animals are often beloved members of the family and research shows pets may help reduce physiological reactions to stress as well as support improved physical activity.
- Work it out. Regular physical activity a recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity or a mix of both weekly can help relieve tension, anxiety and depression, and give you an immediate exercise "high."

"Wellness is more than simply the absence of disease," Levine said. "It is an active process directed toward a healthier, happier and more fulfilling life. When we strive to reduce negative aspects of psychological health, we are promoting an overall positive and healthy state of being."



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Aging Gracefully at Home



3 stylish safety and mobility products

(Family Features) While aging is inevitable, it doesn't mean you can't do so with grace and style. For many seniors hoping to look and feel their best, there are plenty of options, from the clothing they wear to products they use every day. Choosing more 'stylish' safety accessories is one way to go.

To improve quality of life and inspire confidence, Medline, a leading provider of consumer medical products, teamed up with Martha Stewart to introduce the Martha Stewart Home Comfort Care Collection. The line of design-inspired safety and mobility products combines sophisticated design and dependability to help those who use them look and feel their best.

"We are excited to enter into this unique partnership," said Dawn Freitag, Medline senior marketing manager. "Martha Stewart's signature style has always set the standard for better, more enjoyable living and this line of mobility and bath safety products is no exception. We believe these fashionable, modern designs along with our top-rated quality and value pricing will help seniors live their happiest, healthiest lives with exceptional safety, security and style."

Consider these supportive care products to maximize style and safety, and find the full collection by visiting athome.medline.com.

Around the Home

The right mobility aid can help you navigate your home. One option, the Adjustable Rolling Walker, combines a chic, sporty checked pattern with renowned functional features to help you easily stand and walk safely and independently. Its smooth-rolling, all-terrain wheels make it easy to get around in or outside of your home while push-down, locking brakes are ready for a rest stop at any time. Plus, it easily folds for travel and storage, and features under-seat storage and adjustable easy-grip handles for a custom fit and fashionable function.

For the Bathroom

The most essential purpose of bathroom safety aids is to prevent falls on wet, slippery surfaces. Beyond securely-attached bath mats and grab bars, the Martha Stewart Euro-Style Shower Chair allows you to sit while showering for extra peace of mind. With built-in handgrips and a backrest for comfort, the rust-resistant chair also features adjustable, push-button height settings to improve stability and built-in Microban protection to resist mold and mildew.

In the Bedroom

There are numerous products designed to maximize rest, relaxation and safety in and around your bed. To help you get in and out of bed, an Adjustable Bed Assist Bar slides around the side of the mattress – without floor legs that may pose a tripping hazard – to offer support. With a stylish faux woodgrain bag design and neutral color, the bar seamlessly blends in with bedding and linens to provide both function and flair.



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Clever Storage Ideas for Small Spaces

(Family Features) No matter how cramped and cluttered your living space may be, you can almost always find a spot or two for extra storage. It's often just a matter of getting creative and utilizing a few clever solutions.

Consider these simple ideas to create some extra space in oft-used rooms:

Kitchen

Metal rods with hanging hooks can create storage space on your blank walls. Use them to hang coffee cups, cooking utensils, dish towels or pots and pans.

Magnetic strips mounted on the wall or the inside of a cabinet door can be a simple way to hang knives and free up counter space normally taken up by a knife block.

If your countertop is cluttered with small spice containers and oil bottles, elevate them with a decorative cake stand. Place small jars below and top with pretty decanters and additional spices.

If you're using prime cabinet space for items you only use once a year, such as holiday cake pans or a big serving bowl you pull out for parties, consider storing them in the attic or a closet instead. Bathroom

Instead of hanging just one towel bar on the back of the bathroom door, hang multiple to maximize your drying space.

Most modern cabinetry has adjustable shelving. If you haven't customized the heights of your shelving to accommodate different sized bottles and containers, give it a try.

A three-tiered fruit basket might seem perfect for the kitchen, but it's also a handy way to store bathroom essentials right beside the sink.

Flour and sugar canisters can also be repurposed in the bathroom to keep makeup, toiletries, cleaning supplies and soaps contained. Make sure to buy bins that stack easily. Bedroom

Nix those nightstands and hang small shelves on either side of the bed. This cuts down on the clutter you can keep and makes cleaning underneath a breeze.

Rolling bins that fit under the bed are perfect for storing linens, out-of-season clothing and children's toys. They're also the perfect way to slide building block projects out of sight without destroying your child's latest masterpiece.

Closets with a single hanging rod are one of the biggest space-wasters in the bedroom. Double their storage capacity by hanging a second rod or shelf below shorter jackets and shirts.







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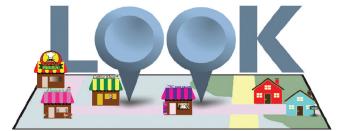
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