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BOSTON UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

FAMILIES' AND CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT STUDY

Study Update by Martha Thompson

Welcome to the new school year! This is a very busy time for us, as our graduate student staff begin a new round of classes, professors teach, and we all continue our visits with the families in our study. We have now completed all our second round of follow-ups and many of our third round of follow-ups. It's hard to believe that we have only about 60 more interviews before we have completed the "Families' and Children's Adjustment Study!"

As much as it is a busy time for us, it is a very busy time for all of you – the families participating in our study. It is back to school time. We all are familiar with what that entails: shopping for new school clothes and supplies, meeting new teachers and friends, reconnecting with old classmates, starting new schedules, and often leaving behind the more open and relaxing summer. At the same time as there is much to be excited about, there is also a great deal of stress around this time.

As a clinical psychologist, one thing I have always been aware of is that kids often get referred for treatment around November of each year – just when the stresses of school are starting to really kick in and first term grades are coming out. In response to this stress, kids can become overwhelmed and have symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.

How do you know if your child is overwhelmed and may need some help? Here are some important things to look for:

- Big changes in behavior (for example, an outgoing kid becomes withdrawn or there is a complete change of friends).
- Change in school performance (for example, was making A's and B's and now making C's and D's).
- Difficulties sleeping or changes in eating habits (for example, loss of appetite or weight).
- Frequent times of feeling down, "blue", or unhappy or very anxious/worried.
- Increased irritability or temper outbursts.
- A loss of interest in fun activities or an inability to really enjoy oneself.

If your child is having difficulties we encourage you to seek help and are always available to help provide referrals. Thoughts of death or suicide are always a sign that help is needed right away.

Despite all the stress, we also know that the new year brings numerous opportunities – both for fun and growth. We wish you both fun and growth this academic year and look forward to being in contact with you in the future.

Ways for Kids to Reduce School-Related Stress:

- Don't get behind! Make time for homework and pace long-term projects.
- Seek help with schoolwork when needed (earlier is better!). Other students, teachers, and after-school programs are great resources
- Make sure to plan plenty of fun activities (but don't over-schedule!)
- Leave some open time – it's good sometimes to have "nothing" to do.
- Talk to friends and family when stressed. Solving problems early keeps them from getting out of hand.
- Schedule family time. Dinners together as often as possible offer an opportunity for families to talk.
- Don't forget to exercise!
- Get plenty of sleep (sleep helps us form long-term memories!).

- ♦ If there have been any changes in your contact information, please let us know as soon as you can by calling us at 617-358-2246 or emailing us at families@bu.edu
- ♦ Visit our website (www.bu.edu/families) for more information about our study and our lab
- ♦ Please email us if you have any ideas for our next newsletter!





BACK TO SCHOOL



The transition from the summer to the school year can bring excitement and reunion, but it can also sometimes bring anxiety and difficulty. Here are some tips to help kids and teens get a positive start!

KNOW YOUR WAY AROUND

If you're starting at a new school, walk around the school before you go, or have someone else show you around. If you get a list of classes and room numbers before school starts, it helps to find all of your classrooms and homeroom before the first day.

STAY ORGANIZED

When you get your exam dates, project deadlines, and sports schedules, write them in a planner so that you can leave yourself enough time to complete assignments and prepare for tests, and to avoid cramming at the last minute.

STAY AHEAD

...and get help early on. If you have a text book, it helps to read the next chapter before you go to class. If you are unsure about something, it is best to ask about it right after class, rather than wait until you are really lost.

PAY ATTENTION & TAKE GOOD NOTES

This can save you study time later. If you take the time to understand the material as you are learning it, you will have less to do at home.



WORK TOGETHER

Compare notes and study with friends to help each other with things you don't understand or may have missed.

TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR BODY

It's important to eat a nutritious breakfast before school each day and to get enough sleep (studies show teens need at least 8 ½ hours each night to feel rested).

GET INVOLVED

Make some new friends by joining one of the many sports teams or clubs at your school.



BRAIN FOOD!



Here are some simple ways to make a healthy breakfast full of protein & carbohydrates to get your brain going before school!

Recipes from www.mrbreakfast.com and www.bhg.com

"EGGS IN A BASKET"

Get a piece of day-old Italian bread or regular bread, then cut a hole out of the center of the bread. Place the bread in a hot pan with a little butter, and crack an egg in the hole of the bread. Cook until the egg is set and the bread is golden brown. (Optional: top with a slice of ham or bacon).



Studies show that kids & teens that eat breakfast perform better in school and are more able to concentrate!

DELICIOUS BREAKFAST SMOOTHIES

Berry Banana Smoothie



Blend all ingredients until smooth:

- * 1 frozen banana
- * ¼ c. fresh or frozen berries (raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, blackberries)
- * 1 c. orange juice
- * 3 Tbsp. yogurt.

Peanut butter & Jelly Smoothie

Blend all ingredients until smooth:

- * 1 ½ c. milk
- * 1 frozen ripe banana
- * 2 Tbsp. peanut butter
- * 2 Tbsp. jelly or preserves (any flavor)
- * ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- * 1 Tbsp. honey
- * 1 c. ice

GRANOLA FRUIT KABOBS

(make 4 servings)

Ingredients:

- * 2 c. granola
- * 2 medium apples (chunked)
- * 2 medium bananas (chunked)
- * 1 c. fresh pineapple chunks
- * 1 c. yogurt

Place granola in a shallow bowl. Toss fruit with a small amount of lemon juice to prevent browning. Insert toothpicks into each piece of fruit. To serve, dip fruit in yogurt, coat all sides, and roll in granola.





FUN FALL EVENTS IN BOSTON



SPOOKY HALLOWEEN FUN

Take a tour of the local graveyards and haunted houses.

www.ghostsandgravestones.com/boston.htm

21st ANNUAL WEEKEND IN THE COUNTRY AT SMOLAK FARMS

Fun for the whole family! Pick-your-own apples and peaches. Hayrides run every 15-20 minutes. Enjoy musical entertainment and home-made apple crisp. Also be sure to check the date for [Great Pumpkin Day](#) at Smolak Farms, featuring a pumpkin carving demonstration, a concert, hayrides, and more. Trick-or-treat hayrides are also offered on the weekends in the fall. (North Andover, 978-682-6332 Sept. 13 & 14, 10am - 4pm).

www.smolakfarms.com

HEAD OF THE CHARLES REGATTA

Watch one of the 55 events at this annual boat racing event on the Charles River (Oct. 18-19).

www.hocr.org/home/default



DRESS UP YOUR PET!

At the Divas Unleashed Annual Halloween Pet Parade in the South End.

www.doggieday.com/halloween

HARVEST HOEDOWN

Have some great family fun with live bands, pick-your-own apples and pumpkins, hayrides, moonwalks, pony rides, cider mill tours, etc. on Columbus Day weekend at C.N. Smith Farm (East Bridgewater, 508-378-2270).

www.cnsmithfarminc.com/index.htm



HALLOWEEN TOWN

A kid-friendly Halloween wonderland with activities for 1- to 12-year-olds (Seaport World Trade Center).

www.halloweentownboston.com

CHECK OUT LOCAL ARTWORK

At the annual Dorchester Open Studios art event (Oct. 25-26).

www.thedac.org/node/342



HARVEST FESTIVAL

Enjoy pumpkin picking, a ride to the pumpkin patch, live music, pony rides, hayrides, cookie decorating, face painting, games, a clown, and games at Verrill Farm (Concord, 978-369-4494), Oct. 11 noon-4pm. Proceeds benefit Emerson Hospital Pediatrics.

www.verrillfarm.com

FREEDOM TRAIL GUIDED TOURS

www.thefreedomtrail.org

OKTOBERFEST & HONK FESTIVAL IN HARVARD SQUARE

Six stages of live entertainment, Over 30 restaurant vendors, hundreds of street vendors selling artworks, jewelry, vintage clothing, neighborhood sidewalk sales, and HONK Bands from around the country! (Oct. 12).

www.harvardsquare.com

BOSTON HILL FARM FALL FESTIVAL

Celebrate the season with pick-your-own apples and pumpkins, a petting zoo and farm stand, hayrides, live music, and food. (North Andover, 978-681-8556).

www.bostonhillfarm.com



USEFUL WEBSITES FOR PARENTS, KIDS & TEENS



FOR ALL KINDS OF LIFE ISSUES

<http://kidshealth.org/index.html>
(separate pages for parents, kids, and teens)

Parents - general health, infections, emotions & behavior, growth & development, nutrition & fitness, pregnancy, positive parenting, first aid & safety

Kids - dealing with feelings, staying healthy, recipes, growing up, understanding grownup health problems, games

Teens - your body, your mind, food & fitness, recipes, drugs & alcohol, infections, school & jobs, staying safe

<http://teenadvice.about.com>

A website full of advice on a variety of topics in the categories of friends, self-esteem, school, family, jobs & money, dating & relationships, health & wellness, and more

www.teensadvisor.com

Advice on a variety of issues that teens face, including communication, types of parents, divorce, school, relationships, and more

FOR SCHOOL

Study skills resource guides & strategies

www.how-to-study.com

www.studygs.net

www.educationatlas.com/study-skills.html

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