



FROM YOUR CFS **Wellness Specialist**



Brain-Healthy Tips for the New School Year

As the new school year begins, setting your child up for success is a top priority for parents. A key aspect of supporting your child's learning, as well as social and emotional development, is nurturing their brain health.

Here are four tips to boost your child's brain development and ensure a successful school year:

1. Prioritize good sleep habits. Ensure your child gets the [recommended amount of sleep](#) for their age – 9-12 hours for most elementary or grade school age children. Adequate sleep is crucial in setting up the brain for success with concentration, learning, and memory. Lack of sleep is often linked to emotional and behavioural problems.

Does your child have problems falling asleep at night? If so, make sure you are following a consistent sleep schedule, using a relaxing bedtime routine, and evaluate the sleep environment to make sure it's comfortable, quiet and dark. [This article has more tips.](#)

2. Keep kids hydrated. Hydration is often overlooked but is vital for brain and body function. [Proper hydration](#) helps improve the ability to focus and multi-task. When the brain signals thirst, dehydration is already occurring. It is important to send a full water bottle with your child to school each day, and encourage them to drink water and refill it as needed throughout the day. Fruits and vegetables can also be valuable sources of hydration if water intake is a struggle.

3. Focus on healthy nutrition. A balanced diet promotes brain development and concentration. Research indicates that [starting the day with breakfast](#) positively impacts school performance. Follow this up with nutritious school snacks and lunches that include proteins, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Regularly consuming these foods fuels the mind for learning and helps prevent blood sugar drops that can hinder focus, concentration, and emotional regulation.

4. Cultivate a routine that includes physical activity. Did you know that exercise is good for the body [AND the mind](#)? Exercise boosts oxygen flow to the brain, and enhances concentration, mood, and memory. Encourage taking quick breaks from homework or screen time to dance, stretch, go for a quick walk, or play some basketball or soccer.
