

We know school is coming up in the next couple weeks and for a lot of parents this time can be a bit overwhelming. We decided to put together a checklist to help because one of a family's greatest challenges is to establish comfortable, effective routines, and for that we have a few tips:

Plus remember you have permission to take a time out for yourself too.

1. Visit the school or classroom before the first day.

This is especially important if your child is returning to in-person learning after periods of remote learning or if your student is moving to a new school from the previous year. If your child's teachers do not invite families to visit ahead of time, you can still take a trip to the school to see the building and the playground. In addition, if this will be your first season with W1 feel free to connect with us on social media before your classes begin. That way you can keep up to date on activities and upcoming events.

2. Talk to your child about their feelings about school, friends, teachers, and new activities.

Social-emotional learning, or **SEL**. SEL refers to the ways in which children build healthy relationships with themselves and with others.

This framework of self-awareness can begin at home. When discussing back-to-school it's a great tool to use when learning about your child's thoughts about school or relationships etc...

Discussion topics include

- What they are looking forward to (Friends, Sports, Learning Subjects)
- Concerns they might have. (Some children might have worries about being bullied, Making new friends, Teachers, Schedules or Hobbies)
- Reading together is a great way to start the conversation too.
- **Mikey and the Dragons - Empowering Kids to Overcome Their Fears!**
- **Benny the Brave in The First Day Jitters- 4 book series**

3. Set intentions with your child for the school year ahead.

Just like adults make intentions for the new year, students can do the same for the new school year.

Try doing a word of the month (keeps everyone on track) for example

These words might include Friendship, Discipline, or Kindness.”

Parents can then use this word to start conversations at home about your child's classroom experience and progress. This can be especially important if this is the first year your child will be attending school and participating in an after school activity such as taekwondo.

4. Go school shopping.

Designating items as “back to school,” like an outfit or backpack, makes preparing for the school year a ritual and can spark excitement.

School shopping can be an annual tradition with the intention of starting anew and resetting your child’s mindset.

5. Encourage your child to pursue a passion project this year.

Ask them what topic they really want to learn about in the school year ahead.

“This opens up another opportunity to create excitement around learning,”

This could be anything from an art project to musical instruments or even something they can use for a talent show.

Here at W1 we suggest focusing that extra energy into advancing your taekwondo skills. Having a sport with a built-in structure of milestones and targets will definitely help keep them on track..

Why would you stay a white or yellow belt, limited to basic kicks, when you could be blue, or red, or black?

6. Ensure a good workspace is available

As most of you remember the remote learning experience, it's imperative nowadays to have a good set up for your child. Just in case they end up having to learn from home even if it's just temporarily or a good place to work on projects or homework for school.

Having a separate space is important to help separate "school time" from free time and can help your child mentally. If you also intend to practice your Martial arts at home, having your gear set up in the garage or in any open space you have available is an excellent way to get them excited for the year to come.

6. Be sure to review your schedule before the chaos begins.

There isn't a cookie cutter answer and everybody will have different routines but one way to do this is to have a calendar with dates and times listed in your home where your children can view this (Central Location). It's also a great practice to set those times up in your phone's calendar with alerts and reminders if you have multiple activities with multiple children. We suggest reviewing these items first thing in the morning to keep it fresh in everyone's mind. We also know logistics

can be tricky when planning the martial arts schedule. There's a few families who all train together, parents and kids, which is a fabulous way to do it. Use your children's enthusiasm to motivate you! Keep in mind the only way to achieve success especially in martial arts is to be consistent and show up even if you don't want to.

Last but not Least

7. How to maintain taekwondo commitments in this new year.

As most of you know that Martial arts isn't a seasonal sport, it's a long term commitment to improving one's self. TKD yields much greater rewards than just belt ranks. Children do best when routines are regular, predictable and consistent (and so do adults!). Scheduling times for homework, chores and practices before fun and play teaches kids the importance (and rewards!) of hard work first.

It's important to remind them that class only takes 30-40 minutes and if they need additional encouragement try inviting their friends to join in with them.

It is usually recommended that beginners practice 2-3 times a week, though more advanced students will likely practice 3 or more times a week, especially if they're looking to advance to a higher level. Be sure to make those expectations clear so that they understand the commitment level and be sure to plan outside activities around that to ensure they are making progress.