

KidsFirst



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Do your kids need an after-school activity?

Join the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston this school year, at no cost to your family! Active Texas Children's Health Plan members between the ages of 6 and 12 can sign up for free school year membership.

To learn how to sign up, visit your local Boys & Girls Club, call 713-868-3426, or visit bgclubs-houston.org.

Questions? Visit TexasChildrensHealthPlan.org or contact Member Services at 1-866-959-2555 (STAR) or 1-866-959-6555 (CHIP).

After-school programs include:

- Academic Success
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Good Character and Citizenship

14 Boys & Girls Club locations across the Greater Houston area

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Back to school checklist

It's normal for kids and parents to both feel nervous on the first day of school, especially if your child is going to school for the first time. Getting your child ready for the new school year can be overwhelming, so here's a handy checklist to help you keep track of it all.

Have a safe and successful new school year!

Source: KidsHealth.org



Clothes, supplies, and lunch

- Check the school **dress code**.
Are there some items students can't wear?
- Does your child need a **change of clothes** for P.E. or art class?
- Have you gotten a **school supply list** from the school or district? Make sure your child has pencils, notebooks, and other supplies to start the year off right.
- Does your child have a safe and comfortable **backpack**? It's important that it's not too heavy for him to carry when it's packed.
- Will your child bring **lunch** from home or buy lunch at school? If your child buys school lunch, figure out how much it will cost each week and take a look at the weekly or monthly menu.

Medical issues

- Has your child gotten all of his required shots/**immunizations** for the new school year?
- Fill out the emergency contact and health **information forms** sent home by your child's school. Make sure he brings the forms back to school on time.
- Talk to your child's teachers and school nurse if he has any **medical conditions**, like food allergies, asthma, diabetes, or anything else that needs to be taken care of during the school day.
- Make sure the school nurse has any **medications** your child might need to take during the school day.
- Talk to your child's teachers about any **conditions** that could affect how he learns, like ADHD or vision problems.

Transportation and safety

- Learn **what time school starts** and how your child will get there.
- If your child is **riding the bus**, do you know where the bus stop is and pickup and drop-off times?
- If you drive your child to school, learn where the school's **drop-off and pick-up area** is.
- Does your child's school have any **rules about bikes or other ways to get around**, like scooters?
- Talk to your child about **traffic safety**, such as crossing the street at the crosswalk, waiting for the bus to stop before walking up to it, and understanding traffic signs and lights.
- If your child walks or rides his bike to school, map out his **safe route** to and from school. Talk to him about never accepting rides, candy, or any other item or invitation from strangers.



The Cancer Vaccine: Why your child should get the HPV shot

As a parent, you do everything you can to protect your children's health now and for the future. Today, we have a weapon to prevent several types of cancer in our kids: the HPV vaccine. The HPV vaccine is important because it protects against cancers caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. HPV is a very common virus that is passed from one person to another during skin-to-skin sexual contact. Nearly 80 million people currently have it in the United States. About 14 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year.

The HPV vaccine offers the best protection to girls and boys who complete the series and have time to build up an immune response before they begin sexual activity with another person. This is not to say that your preteen is ready to have sex. In fact, it's just the opposite—it's important to get your child protected before you or your child have to think about this issue. The immune response to this vaccine is better in preteens, and this could mean better protection for your child in the future.

Every year in the United States, HPV leads to 32,500 cancers in men and women. HPV vaccination can prevent most of these cancers from ever forming.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that boys and girls get the HPV shot (vaccine) at age 11 or 12. Children who are 11 or 12 years old should get 2 shots of HPV vaccine 6 to 12 months apart. Teens who get their two shots less than 5 months apart will require a 3rd dose of HPV vaccine. If your child is older than 14 years, 3 shots will need to be given over 6 months.

Ask your primary care provider (PCP) to protect your child against cancer by giving them the HPV shot as soon as possible. The most common side effects reported after HPV vaccination are mild, like pain and redness where the shot was given, fever, dizziness, and nausea. Bring up any questions or concerns you have about the vaccine so that you can learn and understand all of the facts about HPV and protecting your child from it.

Dr. Lia Rodriguez, MD
Medical Director, Texas Children's Health Plan

Source: [Immunize.org](https://immunize.org)



Talk to your child's teachers, check his homework grades, and read his progress reports and report cards. It's important to help your child however you can as soon as you notice he's struggling so that he doesn't fall behind.

How to help your child with school struggles

It's hard to see your child having a tough time in school, but it's important to remember that you can help him. The first step is to ask him what is making it hard for him to learn. You can start with questions like:

- Is it hard for you to see the board from where you sit in class?
- Do you feel nervous or scared about going to school every day?
- Is it hard for you to sit still and focus when you're in class?

Once you know why your child is struggling in school, you should schedule appointment with:

- His pediatrician. Your child's doctor can examine him to see if he has a physical problem, like trouble with his vision or hearing. The doctor can also help figure out if your child might have an issue with his development or behavior.
- His school principal. It's important that your child's school plays a part in helping him do better in the classroom. Talk to your child's principal about what is going on. Then ask if your child can get a referral for an educational evaluation so that a professional can find out if he has any learning difficulties.

Your child's pediatrician and school principal can help you make a plan to support your child so that he can learn more and do better in school.

Source: KidsHealth.org



Apple cinnamon oatmeal

What you need

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup applesauce
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar

What to do

1. Pour the water, oats, and salt into a medium-size pot on the stovetop.
2. Heat the mixture until it boils, then turn the heat to low.
3. Using a wooden spoon, stir in the applesauce and cinnamon.
4. Cook on low heat and continue to stir the mixture for 5 minutes.
5. Pour the oatmeal into a bowl and sprinkle the brown sugar on top.
6. Allow the oatmeal to cool for a minute, then enjoy!

Source: KidsHealth.org