

1. Ensure that a complete medical examination is done

Before your child starts the new school year, make sure that a complete medical examination is done to determine the child's health status.

2. Ensure that your child is fully immunized

Making sure that children of all ages are fully vaccinated is one of the most important things parents can do to ensure their children's long-term health, as well as the health of friends, classmates and others in the community.

3. Plan Healthy Breakfasts and Lunches

As you prepare to send your children back to school, remember that nutrition is an important factor in academic performance. Studies have shown that children who eat healthful, balanced breakfasts and lunches are more alert throughout the school day and earn higher grades than those who have an unhealthy diet.

4. Food Safety

Parents are reminded to adhere to food safety practices when preparing any type of food. These include:

- Ø Washing of hands with warm water and soap for at least twenty seconds before preparing food.

Ø Cooking of foods that require cooking to an appropriate temperature to prevent loss of nutrients.

Ø Refrigerating foods that need refrigeration at the required temperature before preparation

Ø Preparing food on a clean surface to prevent food-borne illnesses

Ø Checking of canned food labels to determine if they are safe for your children to eat

5. Give your child plenty of water to drink

Remember, water is the best drink for kids and even adults. Soda, sweet teas, fruit drinks and sports drinks contain too much sugar, and have been linked to overweight and obesity.

6. Ensure that your child eats the right food

This requires eating from the five Caribbean food groups which includes proteins and fats, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals, legumes and beans in moderate proportions, which helps your child to function effectively in school.

7. Promote exercise as part of your child's daily routine

Exercise enhances the brain's metabolism, and reduces obesity, which can lead to heart disease. Studies have shown that children, who exercise a lot, have better memory retention, which helps in their overall performance in school.

8. Helping to prevent harmful diseases

Children should be taught to wash their hands for at least 30 seconds before and after using the bathroom, to prevent communicable diseases.

Children should also be taught to wash their hands for at least 30 seconds before handling any type of food to prevent against bacteria, germs and other parasites.