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Do you aspire to have nice children?

It may be even more important to raise a *kind* child. Children who are “nice” have good manners, know when to say “thank you,” and try to treat others well. Kind children possess additional positive qualities and a selfless concern for others. They’re considerate, generous and aim to improve people’s lives, without expecting anything in return.

When your child is kind, their words or actions may have a lasting impact on the people they’re around. Additionally, your child’s acts of kindness may have benefits for their own mental and physical health. Kind children may experience:

- Increased feelings of happiness
- A greater sense of purpose in life
- A more developed sense of empathy
- Lowered stress levels
- A boosted immune system
- Decreased risk of depression
- Feelings of connectedness to others



**#ONOURSLEEVES**

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**Teaching your kids about kindness**

Kindness is better **demonstrated** than **taught**. One of the most effective ways your child may learn about kindness is by following your example. Kids take mental notes and learn when observing their parents, including their attitude about helping others and the way parents relate to friends, relatives and strangers.

When you consistently display kindness in your interactions with others, it may inspire your child to practice kindness as well. If you show how easy it is to incorporate kindness into your life, it may become second nature to your child. Remind your child they may not get thanked for what they do, but kindness feels good, even if no one says thank you.

### WATCH: Teaching your kids about kindness



### Ways children can practice kindness

There are a number of ways children can be kind in their everyday lives. If you're looking for ideas to get your child started, encourage them to try to complete one act of kindness each day. Here are some suggestions:

- Compliment people when they display qualities you admire.
- Get to know the new kid at school, so they feel more connected to someone.
- Hold doors open for others.
- Volunteer at a food pantry, animal shelter or local service organization.
- Pick up trash together on a favorite hiking trail or in your neighborhood.
- Draw a nice picture for a friend or relative who may have had a rough day.
- Put a quarter in a stranger's parking meter.
- Send a heartfelt thank-you note or handmade card to someone who did something kind.

[Click here](#) to download our **On Our Sleeves Kindness Calendar** for you and your family to

**Kindness Calendar**

Use this Kindness Calendar with your family to complete one random act of kindness each day in November.

**Here are a few ideas to get started:**

- Volunteer at a food pantry, animal shelter or local service organization.
- Hold doors open for people.
- Send a thank-you note to someone who did something kind.
- Smile at everyone you see.
- Offer to help a friend with their homework.

Share your activities with us, and any new ideas you have, by using #OnOurSleeves on social media.

**ON OUR SLEEVES**  
A MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

**Wolfson Children's Hospital**  
OF JACKSONVILLE

www.OnOurSleeves.org

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

track your daily acts of kindness throughout the month of November. Also available to **download in Spanish**.

Post the calendar on your refrigerator or bulletin board and write your own ideas in the space provided. Share your kind ideas by using **#OnOurSleevesJax** and **#OnOurSleeves** on social media.

Don't forget to share how you're using *On Our Sleeves* resources! Hit the reply button to tell us your *On Our Sleeves* story.

Sincerely,  
Wolfson Children's Hospital

The mission of *On Our Sleeves* is to provide every community in America access to free, evidence-informed educational resources necessary for breaking stigmas about child mental health and educating families and advocates. For more information, visit [OnOurSleeves.org](http://OnOurSleeves.org).

To access educational resources and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*, visit [wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves](http://wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves).

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Did you know your child may boost their own mental health by focusing on the well-being of others?

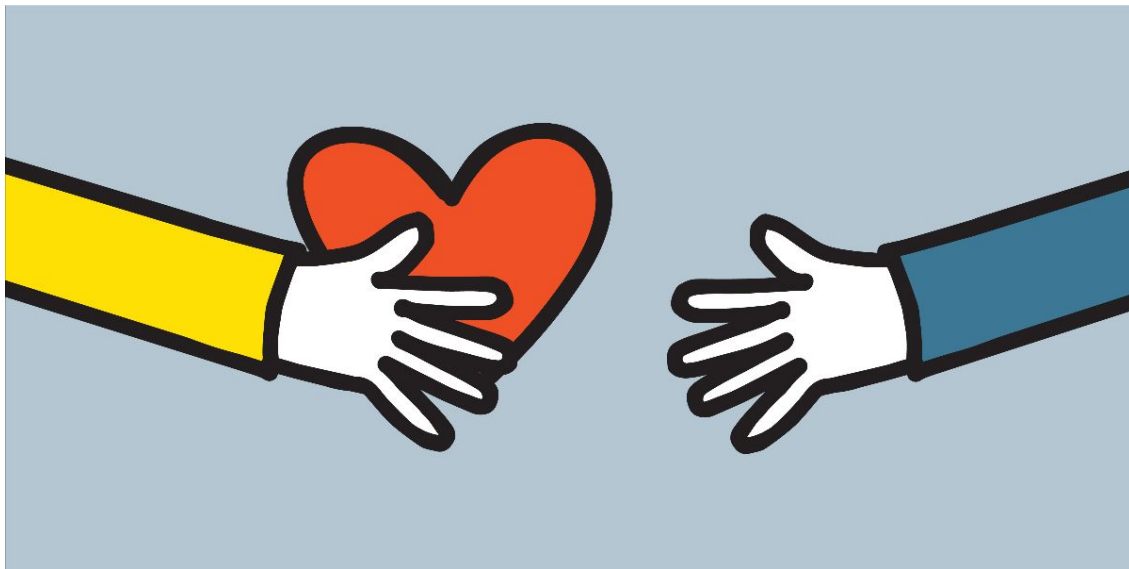
When your child volunteers for a cause, they may feel happier, less stressed, and more compassionate toward others. Kids and teens can advocate for a cause that's meaningful to them right now, or they can devote themselves to organizations whose ideals mirror their own. Children who volunteer may be thrilled to realize they have the power to help others and give back to the community.

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## How Children Can Benefit by Giving Back

When kids and teens volunteer for causes that matter to them, they're likely to:

- **Improve their moods.** Giving back can be enjoyable, especially if your child can see the impact their efforts have on others. If they make friends while volunteering, they may look forward to participating again with their new friends in the future. Volunteering also helps to reduce stress levels and improve life satisfaction.
  - **Boost self-confidence.** Kids who volunteer often learn new skills, become more certain about their leadership abilities, improve communication with others and become more self-sufficient.
  - **Become more empathetic.** Volunteering and working for others help build skills related to empathy, such as understanding the perspectives of others and thinking about their needs. As children work for a cause they care about, they may become more compassionate and generous as well.
-



### 3 Ways to Help Your Child Give Back to the Community

Some families, schools and organizations encourage children to volunteer their time or advocate for causes that are meaningful to them. You can inspire your child to get started, even if you've never volunteered before. Try these three ideas:

**1. Find out what your child is passionate about.** Do they love baking? Reading? Caring for animals? There may be organizations in your area where they can volunteer their time or talents to make a difference. They'll be more inclined to participate – and stick with it – if they choose an activity they enjoy and find personally rewarding.

**2. Make it a family event.** Young children typically can't volunteer without being accompanied by a parent or guardian. Become engaged in the activity instead of sitting on the sidelines or dropping them off. Your child may become even more motivated to improve the world if they see you're helping to further a cause they find significant.

**3. Commit time and resources to the cause.** When you regularly set aside time for giving and advocacy, your child will realize that you prioritize helping others. If your child finds something they're passionate about and participates on an ongoing basis, it may inspire them to continue giving back well into adulthood.

**Need some help finding ways to get involved in your community?** Check out [United Way of Northeast Florida](#).

#### On Our Sleeves Giving Heart

Studies show giving can boost your physical and mental health. As parents and caregivers, it's important to teach children the benefits of giving back and making a difference. Share an activity you can do as a family to experience the greater happiness and satisfaction that comes from giving back.

##### Instructions

1. Use a large brown paper grocery bag.
2. Print out this instruction sheet.
3. Color and cut out the heart icon below.
4. Glue or tape the heart icon to the grocery bag.
5. Fill the bag with items you and your family would like to donate (clothes, toys, nonperishable food, etc.).
6. Donate the bag to your local thrift shop or food pantry. You could even donate the items to a friend or loved one in need.



Share your giving activities with us, and stay new ideas you have, by using #OnOurSleeves on social media.

ON OUR SLEEVES  
The Movement for Children's Mental Health

Wolfson  
Children's Hospital

[www.onoursleeves.org](http://www.onoursleeves.org)

**Click here** to download our **On Our Sleeves Giving Heart** activity (also available to **download in Spanish**) to help motivate and inspire your family to give back to the community. You can donate gently used clothing, toys or nonperishable food to local charities or even friends or loved ones in need.

Share your giving stories by using **#OnOurSleevesJax** and **#OnOurSleeves** on social media.

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Now that school is in full swing, is your child getting enough sleep?

There are many things in life that can get us off track, such as changing schedules and new responsibilities, like homework or studying. Ensuring your child consistently gets enough rest is crucial to their mental and physical health. Sleep helps restore our brain and body and prepare us for the next day. Children who are chronically sleep-deprived are more likely to suffer problems such as frequent illness or obesity, and may even be at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. They are also more likely to experience behavioral health problems, including:

- Feeling stressed, anxious or in a rotten mood, which may lead to depression.
- Becoming argumentative with friends or family members.
- Having trouble concentrating, which may negatively affect schoolwork.

Kids get better-quality sleep when their parents help them consistently practice good **sleep hygiene**. This could be a bedtime routine consisting of a warm bath or shower, book time instead of screen time, a cool and dark bedroom, and a consistent bedtime and wake-up time, even on weekends.

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## 5 Ways to Help Your Child Get Enough Sleep

To encourage a smooth transition to bedtime every night, combine typical sleep hygiene strategies with some additional techniques.

**1. Follow sleep-friendly daytime guidelines.** Get your child to spend time outside during the morning. Early exposure to daylight helps set their internal clock, so they're tired at bedtime. Be sure your child gets plenty of daily exercise so that they're physically tired in the evening. Limit intake of caffeine and sugar, especially later in the day. And once your child outgrows naps, discourage sleeping in the middle of the day, which may prevent them from being tired at bedtime.



**2. Keeping pre-bedtime activities calm.** In the hour before bed, choose soothing activities to help your child unwind. Read, listen to music or have quality family time. Don't have arguments, tell scary stories or do stimulating activities that will energize your child when they should start to feel sleepy.

**3. Only use the bed for sleep.** Some children study, watch TV or play games in bed. During the pandemic, some even attended virtual school there. But using a bed as an activity space confuses the brain and can make it harder for children to fall asleep. Encourage your child to play and study in other parts of your home. Keep screens out of the bedroom, if possible. That may mean charging a cell phone downstairs overnight.





**4. Try soothing sounds.** Some research suggests listening to music at bedtime may help improve sleep quality in children. Consider playing calming songs as quiet background noise while your child rests.

**5. Calculate bedtime by counting backwards.** Figure out what time to put your child to bed by counting back from the time they wake up for school. The amount of sleep children need to function at their best varies by age:

- 3- to 5-year-olds: 10 to 13 hours
- 6- to 12-year-olds: 9 to 12 hours
- Teenagers: 8 to 10 hours

**My Bedtime Routine Checklist**

Make your child's bedtime routine fun! Use this checklist each night and encourage your child to check the box when they complete each activity. At the end of the week, give them a simple reward such as their favorite food, extra screen time or letting them choose a small toy at the store.

- Take a bath 
- Put on pajamas 
- Brush teeth 
- Go to the bathroom
- Read a book 
- Turn off the light
- Sweet dreams

[Click here](#) to download our **Bedtime Routine Checklist** to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board (also available to [download in Spanish](#)).

This Checklist can help make your child's bedroom routine fun! Use this each night and encourage your child to check the box when they complete each activity. At the end of the week, give them a simple reward such as their favorite food, a choice of family game to play, or extra screen time (but not too close to bedtime!). Share your success stories by using [#OnOurSleevesJax](#) and [#OnOurSleeves](#) on social media.

Watch this video to see why a good night's sleep is important:



Gina McDowell, LPCC-S  
Big Lots Behavioral Health, Clinical Educator

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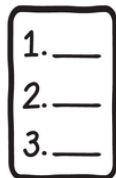
Wow! Where did the time go?

Summer is officially winding down and back-to-school time is quickly approaching. After a school year filled with restrictions, changes in teaching styles and fewer social interactions due to COVID-19, going back to school this August might feel exciting, yet stressful.

Some kids may be eager to get back into their routine, see friends and attend after-school activities. Others might be anxious or nervous, whether they feel worried about entering a new grade or are concerned with health and safety issues.

Preparing your child for the upcoming school year requires more than a trip to the store for supplies. This year especially, kids need to know what to expect before school begins. Being informed will help them prepare emotionally, which can lower stress levels and help them perform at their best, academically and socially.

Here are six ways you can help your child prepare for in-person or virtual school:



**1. Learn the nitty-gritty details.** Review your child's expected schedule and new routine for school. If they are a visual learner, hang a calendar that shows which days they will be at school and which days they will be at home. This can help the whole family stay on track! About 1-2 weeks before school starts, gradually (15 minutes each day) move your child's bedtime and wake-up time back to what they will be during the school year. For in-person learners, find out what COVID-19 protocols will be enforced this year, so your child knows whether to expect masks or other precautions.



**2. Check in with the pediatrician.** Routine check-ups are especially important this year, as many people have not been seeing the doctor regularly since springtime. Make sure vaccine records and sports physicals are up to date so kids can participate in activities they enjoy.



**3. Talk about feelings.** Kids who spent last year at home may be nervous to venture into classrooms or continue in virtual school. Listen to their concerns. Are they nervous to spend time away from you after a year of togetherness? Are they worried they won't make friends? Are they afraid they're lagging behind their peers in reading? Reassure your child that you'll figure out

how to overcome challenges together. Also, don't focus solely on concerns: Ask your child what they're excited to experience at school, then keep tabs on their progress.

**4. Discuss realistic expectations.** Ask your child what their goals are for the school year. Talk about ways to ease back into old learning habits. Does homework need to be done before screen time? Remind them. If they are learning from home, make sure to schedule in breaks, such as playtime and meals, and an end time.

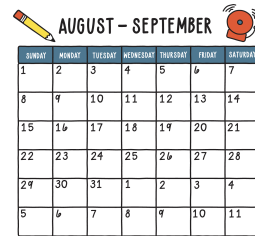


**5. Communicate with teachers.** Email teachers early about any school-related anxiety your child may have, including social concerns. If they're hesitant to return to school after a year at home, a teacher may be willing to seat your child near a friend to make the transition back to the classroom easier.



**6. Make the most of the present.** If your child is worried about the school year as a whole, find ways to focus on the present. Spend quality time together talking about school while doing fun activities. Practice mindfulness to help your child relax and appreciate each moment, instead of stressing about the future.

[Click here](#) to download our Back-to-School Countdown Calendar to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board. It is also available to [download in Spanish](#).



To access educational resources and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*, visit [wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves](http://wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves).

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Summer is officially here!

While we want summer to be a time for our kids to relax and enjoy themselves, we also know children thrive and feel most safe when there is a sense of daily routine. If you can maintain structure during the summer, it will make the transition back to school easier. It also reminds kids they don't need to forego structure in order to have fun!

### 7 Ways to Help Your Kids Maintain Summer Structure



**1. Have set bedtimes, wake-up times and routines.** The times may not be as early as during the school year, but should be consistent throughout the entire summer.

**2. Don't throw away the rules and chore charts; maintain expectations.** Make sure they are still aware of rules and responsibilities throughout the summer. This will help avoid power struggles, so you can maintain a positive relationship with your child all season long.



**3. Have a visible schedule for your kids** so they know when activities are happening throughout the week.

**4. Eat meals at the same time each day** – ensuring they are eating and drinking enough throughout the hot summer days. This also helps break up the day into smaller pieces, making it easier to manage.



**5. Get children linked with summer activities (i.e., summer camps, sports, summer school).** This will help them remain active and social so they aren't inside on their computers all day. Typically, summer activities have their own schedules which will also help promote routine.

**Need ideas?** Check out this [calendar of events](#) from Jacksonville Mom. You can also see what your local library has planned:

[Duval](#) [St. Johns](#) [Nassau](#) [Clay](#) [Baker](#)



**6. Start getting back in the school year routine** before school starts so you can work out all the kinks before the first day.

**7. Most importantly, enjoy all this season has to offer and have fun!**

## Tips to Manage Summer Boredom

Without a routine, classmates or schoolwork, many children find themselves a little bored. Our behavioral health experts share ideas to manage summer boredom and help children get their creative juices flowing!

[Click here](#) to download Summer Boredom Busters to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board.

## Summer Boredom Busters for Kids

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Also, be sure to share the **Boredom Busters** you've tried using #OnOurSleeves and #OnOurSleevesJax on social media!

To access other evidence-informed educational resources and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*<sup>®</sup>, visit [wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves](http://wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves).

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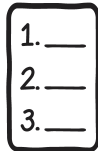
We've all set goals about physical health or fitness at some point in the past. As summer approaches, we are also encouraging you to set a goal to practice mental wellness!

We're excited to help you and your family practice wellness with our **Mental Fitness Challenge**. We know that mental health is just as important as physical health and that these often affect each other. Remember, keeping our brain in shape is just as important as physical fitness. Over the next month, try to incorporate mental wellness habits into your weekly routine. Here are some ways you can keep your brain in shape as a family:



**Get enough sleep.** This means everyone in the house, not just the kids.

Sleep affects our physical health and our mental health. It affects our ability to function and lack of sleep can make us feel stressed and anxious. Sleep also helps improve our mood. We are so much more productive when our body and mind are rested.



**Find something you are thankful for every day.** Take time to recognize one thing you and your family are grateful for every day, even if it's something small. You can do this in the morning over breakfast, over the dinner table, or even by writing a note/email/text to someone you are grateful for. Showing gratitude improves our overall mood, and it's an awesome thing to teach our kids, too!



**Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness is focusing on one thing in the moment and pressing pause on your thoughts and things you need to do. For example, go for a short walk around the neighborhood, but while you're walking, really pay attention. Look at the colors of the leaves, the blue sky, listen to the sounds around you, and take a big breath in to smell the air. Just allow yourself to be present in the moment and take a mental break. This is another great tool to teach our children.

Are you interested in other ideas to stay mentally fit? We have **22** fun and creative suggestions for you and your family to try.

## 22 ways to practice mental wellness

You can **print the challenge** to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board so you can follow along all month with us. Also, be sure to share the challenges you completed and how you are staying mentally fit by using #OnOurSleeves and #OnOurSleevesJax on social



media!

To learn more about the **Mental Fitness Challenge**, access other evidence-informed educational resources, and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*<sup>®</sup>, visit [wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves](https://wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves).

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