

# BACK TO SCHOOL



## MOMS 2 MOMS

**INSIDE:** "Grand" Mom | School Bus Safety | College Majors  
School Savings | Head Lice & Bed Bugs | Swine Flu  
Kindergarten | Drug Use in Teens | School Bathroom Breaks



# Feature

## Cynthia Berditis "Grand" Mom - Grandparents raising their grandchildren

By: **Liz Martin**

Our culture, where parenting is concerned, has evolved into a whole new dynamic—grandparents raising their grandchildren. Many variations of this new family unit exist today, including single grand-parenting. There are a host of reasons why a grandparent may find him or herself raising a child or children later in life, including military involvement of the parents. Often, however, they find themselves dealing with their own adult child who may be dealing with his or her own issues.

Some grandparents raise children on an informal basis, with no legal arrangement, which can lead to problems with school enrollment, obtaining medical services, and the challenge of providing a secure and stable environment for the child. The grandparent may ask questions such as, "Should I adopt my grandchild?"-- "Should I seek full custody?"

Our special mom this month is indeed a "Grand" Mom. Cynthia Berditis has raised her grandson, Kevin, now age 12, from the time he was a baby.

Cynthia's husband died in January 1996, which left her with the responsibility of an adult daughter with substance abuse issues. Soon afterward, she learned that her daughter was pregnant. The baby's father was also dealing with similar issues of his own.

"In September of 1997, my daughter gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. We got through his first year with the help of a very helpful neighbor," Cynthia said.

Having a baby didn't change her daughter's tendencies. So, one day, following a serious argument, Cynthia advised her to leave with the baby, thinking she would inevitably bond with him. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. Ten months later, and with her daughter in trouble with the law, yet again, Cynthia made a deal with her daughter.

"I told her that, if she would go into rehab, I would care for Kevin," she explained. By the time Kevin was

three, it was clear that Cynthia's daughter wasn't willing to help herself, even for the sake of her son. This time, she was asked to leave without Kevin.

"Imagine being alone, working in nursing (3-11 p.m.) and later social work, basically for the hours and medical benefits, and on top of it all having a child to raise. What was most surprising was that my family turned their backs on me," she noted.

Cynthia had two grown daughters from a previous marriage, "who didn't feel that I should be raising Kevin. If I didn't, who would?" she queried. "In my eyes, foster care wasn't an option."

Cynthia dealt with the day-to-day challenges of raising a young child—getting herself and Kevin up and ready every morning, day care, work for eight hours, pick up Kevin and return home.

"At times, when I was really stressed, I would ask the girls to give me a break and watch him so I could go out for a while, but they would not help," she said.

The one and only person who kept Kevin in touch with his father was his paternal great grandmother, who insisted their family be involved at certain times. Although the decision to allow this interaction was a tough one for Cynthia to make, due to the substance abuse issues, she didn't want to deny Kevin the right to see his father. The arrangement worked well while the great grandmother was involved. "Kevin was like any other little boy—he loved his parents," she explained.

By the time Kevin started kindergarten, his great grandmother had passed on. Coincidentally, the day of the funeral was the last day that Kevin saw his father. He and his mother moved out of state.

"Kevin sent a card, made an audio tape for him, and sent it one Father's Day, but he never received a reply," Cynthia added. "Prior to that, Kevin had blamed me for not allowing him to see his father." That was a turning point in Kevin's life, but today



Cynthia and Kevin Berditis in their first "family portrait" taken in 2006.

he is a happy, well-adjusted 12 year-old boy who does well in school, looks forward to summer camp, and especially loves to have his picture taken. To look at the camp's weekly photo collage, one would never suspect the turmoil that he faced as a young child.

"Kevin made the honor roll three times this past year," Cynthia proclaimed proudly. "I am so proud of him."

At one point, Cynthia found the book, "Idiot's Guide to Raising a Boy," and she and Kevin pull it out now and then. "We laugh about some of the topics," she quipped. "I raised three girls, but didn't know a thing about raising a boy—nor did he have a male influence in his life. I have to be every one and every thing."

Cynthia's older daughters and other family members remain unhappy about her raising Kevin. "Situations like this can tear families apart," she said.

"I have to be thankful to my mother

for being who she is. It is because of her that I became strong enough to go on and do this," she said.

Through the years, Cynthia has spoken to a number of lawyers about adoption, but the response has been the same... "A judge will not bastardize a child," and, "Why adopt? You both have the same last name." The bottom line is that—being single—Cynthia is not qualified to legally adopt Kevin.

"It was a huge adjustment in the beginning, for both of us, but today Kevin and I are very close. At times we even argue like an old married couple," she concluded, with a smile.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:**

**Know someone that has made a difference in the life of a child and should be featured in the online Moms2Moms.net publication? Let us know by emailing: [mom@moms2moms.net](mailto:mom@moms2moms.net) or [communitynews123@comcast.net](mailto:communitynews123@comcast.net).**

# Health

## Creatures that go "Bite" in the night

Bed bugs wait for dark, snuggle up beside unsuspecting sleepers and take a bite before scattering when the lights come on. The above mentioned scenario happens on college campuses across the country every year. Bed bugs are a scourge that are affecting college students regardless of geography.

Bed bugs are flat, oval, apple-seed sized insects that feed on blood. These brown-red bugs often lie in wait in the crevices of bed sheets and mattresses until it is dark and a meal host is asleep. They can feed anywhere from 3 to 10 minutes at a time. Many times a person does not even know he or she has been bitten unless a welt or another mark has been left behind.

Bed bugs are not easily controlled. They multiply rapidly -- females can produce generally 500 eggs in their six to 12 months of life. The bugs are also good at hitching rides on clothing, linens and luggage. If one room in a dormitory has a bed bug problem, it's likely that others do, too, or will shortly. Bed bugs can also be brought home from transient students. When visiting Mom and Dad during a holiday, a student can transfer bed bugs from campus to his or her own abode.

No one really knows why bed bugs have experienced a resurgence. Some surmise that reasons include changes in pest control practices, increased international travel and fewer pesticides being available to pest-control companies. To avoid bed bugs in a dorm room, college kids should consider these methods of preventing infestation.

Do not furnish a room with used furniture. Unless certain the sofa or bed is bed bug free, it's best to leave it alone and look for other furnishings. Pass up that couch found on the curb. While it may be free, there's no telling whether or not it's infested with bed bugs.

Students who suspect bed bugs should carefully inspect their belongings for hitchhikers. Look in the folds of clothing, pockets, zippered areas, etc. Bed bugs will retreat to concealed locations.

Keep the room as clutter-free as possible. Launder clothes and linens frequently in hot water, which kills bed bugs.

Consider using a mattress cover to prevent bed bugs from burrowing inside. If a bed bug problem is suspected in a dorm room, student housing should be contacted to remedy the situation professionally. As mentioned, bed bugs can be difficult to eradicate, and it takes professional measures to do it correctly.



**Bed bugs like to hide in linens and are a growing problem at college dormitories nationwide.**

## Watch Out for Head Lice

In an era when mobile phones provide Internet access and laser eye surgery restores vision in one visit, it might seem incredulous that a tiny, parasitic bug could cause such havoc. But lice are alive and well and continue to plague school children and their parents.

Lice are very small insects that live in the hair. They feed on blood and reproduce right on the scalp. A louse can live for up to 30 days on a person. Eggs -- called nits -- can survive for two weeks.

Because they spread through close contact with other people, lice are a common concern in the classroom. Students frequently share close proximity with others and may store their coats, hats and other belongings in lockers or cubbies directly next to others. Should one student have lice, the rest of the students are at risk.

A lice infestation is identifiable by a few different symptoms. Initially, visibly identify lice and their eggs. Nits look like dandruff flakes, but do not fall off the hair shaft easily like dandruff. Rather, they are coated with a sticky substance that keeps them on the hair securely. Lice are very small, but can be seen moving on the scalp if one looks closely. They are commonly found around the ears and at the top of the neck where eggs are laid.

Bumps on the scalp, shoulders and neck where lice have bitten can also indicate a problem, as can intense itching of the scalp.

Treatment for lice includes medicated shampoos and lotions designed to kill the live bugs and their eggs. These can be bought over-the-counter. If the OTC shampoos do not work, a doctor can offer a prescription for a stronger medicine. Removal of the nits with a comb is also recommended.

Lice can live off of the scalp for a short period of time. It pays to treat porous fabrics, such as carpeting and upholstery, with sprays designed to kill lice as a precaution. Thoroughly launder linens and clothing of the infected person.

It is important not to send a child to school until lice treatment has been completed. Part of the reason lice are so troublesome is that there is a high chance of reoccurring infestation.

## Clean hands save lives

Washing hands isn't simply a method of cleaning up before sitting down to dinner. Frequent hand-washing is the single most effective way to prevent illness. Proper hand-washing has proven effective against the spread of 99 percent of germs that travel via droplets -- and that includes the flu virus. The fact of the matter is that dirty hands have the potential to be deadly, especially if they are the carriers of hazardous germs.

It's impossible to avoid germs. Simply going about daily activities exposes a person to thousands of germs. Shopping in a store, going to school or even spending time around the house can spread germs. When a person touches his or her eyes, mouth or nose with hands that are harboring viruses or bacteria, illnesses can easily take root. Germs can also be spread via touch.

There are many times when hands should be washed. Before ... preparing food, eating food, inserting or removing contact lenses, treating someone who is sick or injured, giving or taking medicine. After ... changing a diaper, touching an animal, pet toys, etc., using the bathroom, using public transportation, preparing food, especially raw meats and poultry, handling garbage or soiled items, touching a sick or injured person, blowing your nose or sneezing.

Proper Hand-Washing Techniques - there is a right way to wash hands. Follow this procedure, courtesy of The Mayo Clinic. Turn on the water to desired temperature (cold or hot water is equally effective). Wet hands under running water.

Apply soap and lather for 20 seconds or more, paying careful attention to all areas of the hands, including the backs of the hands. Rinse well.

Dry hands on a towel or with an air dryer. Use a towel to close the faucet.

**Continue on next page**

# Health

Many germs live on wet faucet handles, and a person can contaminate him or herself again.

Keep in mind that antibacterial soap is no more effective at killing germs than regular soap. In fact, antibacterial products -- when overused -- actually may kill off good bacteria or cause certain bacteria to become resistant. This will make it harder to kill these germs in the future.

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based sanitizers are effective at keeping hands clean. Look for commercially produced products that contain at least 60 percent alcohol. Enough of the product should be used to wet hands completely. Rub hands and wait for the product to be completely dry for maximum effectiveness.

**For answers to any health related question or concern, always consult with your health care professional or physician.**

## H1N1 Flu Facts & Figures

The H1N1 flu is a new influenza virus that was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009.

Originally, this virus was referred to as "swine flu" because initial laboratory testing indicated that many of the virus' genes were similar to genes present in viruses that occur in pigs. However, further research indicated the virus is, in fact, quite different from that which circulates in pigs.

As of late 2009, the virus was still spreading from human to human in much the same way as ordinary influenza viruses, including through coughing or sneezing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those infected with the H1N1 virus may be able to infect others from one day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after.

## Is Your School Ready for Swine Flu?

H1N1, commonly known as swine flu, may not make headlines anymore, but that doesn't mean the risk is any less real. The transmission rate for H1N1 flu remains high. In areas where individuals are in close proximity, such as schools, swine flu has the potential to spread rather quickly.

As a result, the Food and Drug Administration approved an H1N1 vaccine last year, the widespread distribution of which began in October 2009. The seasonal vaccine is not effective against the disease, while other drugs can simply alleviate symptoms but not stop the spread of swine flu.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend all children ages 6 months to 18 years receive the H1N1 vaccine depending on individual susceptibility to the illness. Adults with school-aged children in the house also may want to get vaccinated. Young children are highly susceptible to the disease and could face the most serious consequences from the illness if not vaccinated or treated promptly.

Since schools are a likely Ground Zero point for swine flu outbreaks, it is important for educators and administrators to take the disease seriously and prepare. Each school will need to institute its own policies regarding H1N1. Here are some suggestions that can help mitigate the threat of flu proliferation on school grounds.

Install hand sanitizers throughout the school or request students bring in their own individual bottles for use. Routinely use disinfectants to wipe down door-knobs, faucets, computer keyboards, light switches, and other surfaces that are touched by members of the student body.

Mandate that students and faculty with influenza-type symptoms stay home for 7 days, even if symptoms subside before those 7 days are up. Promptly isolate and send home any students or faculty who exhibit symptoms (see below) of swine flu.

Monitor for swine flu symptoms to catch the illness early on. Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, possible vomiting, diarrhea, and possible respiratory symptoms without fever.

Ensure students and faculty cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing and routinely wash their hands with soapy water. Parents should monitor their children and keep them home from school if they exhibit flu-like symptoms, even if it means missed days from work.

Host assemblies or special seminars educating the student body and faculty about flu hygiene and risks. If a serious outbreak occurs in the school, administrators should use their discretion about closing the school to disinfect and wait for the students to be symptom-free. However, the CDC recommends that schools do not close for swine flu "unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school's ability to function."

Although a serious illness, swine flu can be managed with vaccinations, education and smart thinking on the part of parents, students and faculty working together.



## Backpack Safety Goes Beyond Back Pain

When it comes to backpack safety, most people tend to think about injuries caused by a heavy backpack or one worn improperly. However, there are other dangers associated with backpacks and caution should be used.

Backpacks come in all shapes and sizes and can be a handy tool for students or adults. When worn correctly, with weight evenly distributed across the back and shoulders, backpacks can be safer and more effective than using a purse or briefcase. But many people wear overly loaded backpacks slung over one shoulder, which can pose problems with posture and lead to back issues.

In addition to the physical strain backpacks can cause, they can be a danger in other ways. Many people fail to recognize how much space a backpack can take up. Entering the tight quarters of a school bus or commuting on a train or bus means a bulky backpack can knock into other people. If that backpack is full of heavy, cumbersome books or even a laptop computer, an inadvertent bump by the pack can cause injuries. Also, backpacks taken off and placed in bus aisles can be a tripping hazard.

Students also can be injured if a heavy pack falls on them. Children tucking backpacks into lockers or classroom cubbies may find that they slide out and hit another classmate.

Backpacks change the way individuals walk. Because the person is carrying around extra weight, he or she may lose balance or trip and fall, especially when going down steps.

To avoid these secondary hazards from backpacks, consider these tips. Don't overload a backpack. Carry only what is necessary. If too many books are the issue, parents should talk to the school administrators and teachers to reach a happy medium regarding textbook usage.

When on the bus, safely store the backpack on a lap or under the seat. Be sure straps or the pack itself is not extending into the aisle. Avoid rolling backpacks, which can be difficult to roll. Some schools ban these styles because of tripping hazards.

Recognize how much space the backpack takes up when worn. Be conscious of others when turning around or entering a confined space.

# Back to School

## Be Smart: School Bus Safe

School buses are essential modes of transportation, taking thousands of students to and from school every day. While school bus accidents are rare, riders should still practice safety aboard and around the bus.

In the early days of education, students were educated in local schools within walking distance. If they needed to travel, it was by horse-drawn wagon. As the nation's roadways began to evolve, so did the methods of getting children to school. Eventually school buses became the norm.

In an effort to prevent injuries, representatives from 48 states met in 1939 to establish safety standards for school buses. Since then, several meetings, known as the National Conferences on School Transportation, have taken place to modify safety procedures and standards.

In addition to safety procedures regarding ridership, school buses are built with certain standards in mind. Mirrors, lights, braking systems and the like are regulated to provide the utmost safety to passengers. While catastrophic accidents involving school buses are very rare, buses are built to handle much more than the occasional run-ins with passenger cars and light trucks.

Maintaining school bus safety is a team effort. Students need to do their part while riding the bus. Here are the safety precautions that should be followed.

Walk to the bus stop, don't run. Always use caution when crossing roadways. Walk on the sidewalk whenever possible. If no sidewalk is present, walk in the opposite direction of traffic to be aware of on-coming traffic.

Don't fool around at the bus stop. Accidents can happen when individuals are unaware of their surroundings or distracted. Stand at the bus stop in a safe location. Do not enter the street. Arrive at the bus stop early so there is no need to rush and be distracted.

Wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop and for other traffic to halt before approaching the bus. Promptly take a seat, and remain seated throughout the entire ride. If there are safety belts present, use them. Do not distract the bus driver with loud yelling, music, etc.

Don't throw anything around the bus. Keep the aisle clear to avoid tripping hazards. Follow the driver's instructions in the event of an emergency. Remain seated until the bus has stopped at a particular drop-off location.

When exiting the bus, take three steps away from the bus so that visibility of the driver is improved. Watch for traffic when crossing the street. Always cross in front of the bus.

If something is forgotten on the bus, don't try to run back and retrieve it. The driver may not expect a student to be returning to the bus.



## On the Road to Kindergarten: Getting Kids Ready for the Big Day

Kindergarten will be many children's first foray into school. Their experiences in kindergarten can set the scene for a lifetime of learning. To start laying the foundation for your child's entrance into formal education, consider the following tips. Identify the school your child will attend. You can call your county school board or simply ask other parents in the area. Some communities assign schools, while others allow parents to choose their child's school. When determining which case applies to your community, inquire about bus service as well.

Some schools have full-day kindergarten programs, while others offer half-day. This may be district-specified or the choice of the parent.

Visit the school to find out about registration requirements. You'll likely have to fill out forms and provide proof of residence. The school also will inform you of any rules they have, including copies of health records, screenings or placement testing.

A routine physical exam and a copy of immunization records will most likely be required. Visit your child's pediatrician to ensure that he or she is up-to-date with shots and receives a health check-up. Proof of dental visits may be required.

If your child will be attending a private school, the school may have registration fees, supply fees, uniform requirements, and other expenses. It's important to find out about these costs ahead of time.

Visit the school with your child ahead of time. Attend a kindergarten open house or school tour. This way kids can become familiar with the premises and won't be caught off guard the first day of school. A tour will provide an example of the school's layout and overall atmosphere.

Make friends with parents whose children attend the school. Set up a play date so your child will see some familiar faces on the first day of school.

Talk about attending school and make it seem like a positive experience. Let kids know school is something to look forward to. Some children get excited about kindergarten just because they get to ride the bus.

Shop for a backpack and a lunch box early on so that your child will be excited for school. Enable him or her to choose supplies in the theme of choice.

Find out which types of lessons your child will be learning and begin to practice some of them at home, including the alphabet, preliminary math and writing. Always use positive reinforcement and talk about school in an upbeat way. This increases the likelihood that kids will look at school in a positive light.

Discuss fears and concerns about kindergarten with your child. This way you can work out situations before the first day of school starts.

**MOMS 2 MOMS** Have a Safe, Healthy & Happy School Year!

# Back to School

## Skip Boring School Lunches: Easy Meal Ideas Students Will Love

A brown paper bag or a plastic lunch box. No two items can elicit such fear in the hearts of parents across the country. They seem like harmless items on the surface, but it's coming up with what goes inside can be truly scary.



Day after day, creating new lunch ideas that children will actually eat can be challenging. Parents are often short on time in the evening or the morning before the bus arrives and may be at a loss as to what foods to keep stocked in the pantry, which makes planning lunches a taller order than it may seem.

Rest assured that concocting school lunches doesn't have to be difficult. Follow these tips for lunchtime success.

Think outside the bread. Bread can be boring. Skip the sandwiches and think of other foods that can serve as the wrapping for tasty foods. Tortillas, pitas, pizza crusts, and crackers are other ideas for topping or holding items together. What's more, rolling up a tortilla or topping your own pizza is much more fun than biting into that standard PB&J sandwich.

Explore more mature flavors. Who says kids only want bologna and cheese? Ask your child what he or she enjoys eating and stock up on those ingredients. For example, if you enjoy a wrap of grilled chicken with fresh mozzarella and basil, your child might as well.

Make it fun. Pack lunch according to a theme. Maybe Monday is all round-shaped foods. Tuesday may be cowboy themed, with southern flair. On Wednesday all the foods may be red. Your child will be eating the same foods he or she always did but just in a more interesting way. Chances are if it's fun to eat, the kids will be on board.

Involve the kids. Make a chart that lists foods in specific categories: fruit, vegetable, meat, dairy, and snack. Enable your child to pick the combination he or she desires each day. Involving children in meal creation helps make them more in tune with food choices and more likely to eat what they have chosen.

Who says lunch has to be "lunch"? Instead of packing the requisite lunch foods, consider breakfast items instead. Maybe your child will enjoy a banana wrapped in a pancake or yogurt topped with crunchy granola. A mini bagel packaged with an individual serving of cream cheese and jelly could fit the bill, too. As long as your child is eating a healthy, balanced meal, it doesn't matter what the foods may be.

## Savvy School Supply Saving Tips

As bittersweet as back to school can be, one aspect few parents enjoy is the annual school supply shopping trip. Students of all ages must purchase school supplies each year, and parents with more than one child in school might cringe at the costs of such supplies. Recognizing those concerns, OfficeMax, an industry leader in both office and school supply products, offers the following shopping tips to help savvy parents prepare their kids to start the school year on the right foot.

**Take inventory.** Most parents remember the last day of school growing up, when pens, papers and notebooks were set aside for the summer the moment the final bell rang. However, unless kids threw everything in the trash on their way out of school, chances are many of their supplies from last year are still lying around the house. While last year's notebooks may not be reusable, locate pens, rulers and other supplies that are in good shape, and take inventory of what you can reuse and what new items should be purchased. Selling affordable school supplies in bulk or individually, OfficeMax gives parents the option to purchase entirely new supplies or supplement their children's school supplies, purchasing only the materials they need to start the school year.

**Make a list.** Today's school supplies are flashier than ever, essentially transforming the school supply aisle into something that would fit right in at the local toy store. Kids are typically as mesmerized by the school supply aisle as they are when they visit a toy store, so parents should make a list before heading out and stick to that list to avoid overspending.

**Start shopping early.** Many of today's teachers post a class syllabus online well in advance of the first day of school. The syllabus typically lists the supplies and textbooks the class requires. With a vast and ongoing stock, OfficeMax boasts an extensive inventory of school supplies that help parents and students secure the materials they need throughout the year and save money when so doing.

**Purchase supplies that excite your child.** In essence, school supplies are designed to help children be their best.

## Recognizing Drug Use in Teenagers

The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry says that the average age for children to experiment with drugs (marijuana is the most commonly used first-time drug) is age 14, and they may have had their first alcoholic drink by age 12. Would you recognize the signs of alcohol or drug use in your child?

Many adolescents see this time in their lives as the opportunity to experiment. Teenagers also may feel that they are relatively indestructible. As such, drug and alcohol use can be a way to fit in with peers, try something exciting or self-medicate to alleviate physical or emotional problems. The use of marijuana and alcohol during high school has become common. Teenagers are also increasingly using prescription drugs to get high thanks to their accessibility.

Recognizing drug or alcohol use requires knowledge of key physical signs and certain behaviors. However, some children are astute in masking drug use. In fact, teen drug use can start months or even years before a parent recognizes signs. A red flag should be raised if you notice one or more of these warning signs.

Repeated health complaints, extreme fatigue or extreme hyperactivity, glazed-over or red eyes, lasting cough and decreased interest in activities. Weight loss, poor personal hygiene, seclusion and isolation, marked changes in behavior, faltering grades, depression, low self-esteem, aggression or irritability. Intentionally arguing with family members, changes in dress, new friends or hang-out spots, secrecy and sudden need for more money.

# Back to School

## Top 10 Most Popular College Majors

Each year, college kids across the country face the difficult decision of choosing a major. Some schools allow students to choose a major at their own pace while others require students to pick a major freshman year.

Though capricious college kids are known to change their majors from time to time, according to the Princeton Review, a resource to help students, parents and educators achieve the best results at every stage of their educational careers, the following 10 majors are the most popular among the nation's college students.

1. Business Administration and Management Commerce
2. Psychology
3. Nursing
4. Biology/Biological Sciences
5. Education
6. English Language and Literature
7. Economics
8. Communications Studies/Speech Communication and Rhetoric
9. Political Science and Government
10. Computer and Information Sciences

Though these majors are popular, the Princeton Review notes they are not necessarily the majors that garner the most demand in the job market, particularly in the current economy. When choosing a major, it's best for students to choose a field that interests them, regardless of how popular or potentially lucrative that field might be.

---

Know of a special mom that should be recognized and featured in our Moms2Moms online publication?

Send an email to:  
[mom@moms2moms.net](mailto:mom@moms2moms.net)

## Students Avoiding School Bathrooms May Pay a Price

Returning to school means many adjustments for students and parents. There are new teachers, new schedules and new rules. Kids who have grown accustomed to a laid-back summertime routine may find there are many changes in store for them come the new school year --including changes to their body and bathroom habits.

Students have the propensity to avoid school bathroom stalls for a variety of reasons. Kids can get nervous about taking too many bathroom breaks. It's a situation where making friends and learning a new structure trumps the body's needs, and school rules and activities do little to allow kids the freedom to go. Some find school bathrooms are just not private or clean enough. With other people around and a limited amount of time until the next class or activity, kids simply won't go. The end result can be pesky constipation.

Bathroom No-Go - many children choose to "hold it in" rather than use school bathrooms, according to research. Pedia-Lax, the most complete line of laxatives made just for kids, partnered with Weekly Reader to conduct a survey about school bathroom habits of boys and girls ages 6 to 11. In the survey, nearly two-thirds



(64.6 percent) said that they rarely or never "go number two" in school bathrooms. In fact, nearly 40 percent always or often choose to withhold bowel movements rather than go at school.

Why does it matter when kids go? Well, when kids can't or won't use the bathroom, the colon absorbs water from the stool, making it hard and dry. Intercepting this bad habit of withholding is important because continuing to resist the urge to go can cause the brain to begin to ignore the urge as well. This avoidance of going to the bathroom is one of the most common causes of constipation in children over 18 months of age -- and it's a situation that typically worsens with changes to a routine such as back-to-school.

Solving Digestive Slowdown - Unfortunately, while children may not worry about their bathroom habits, you do. What can you do about it? In the end, it's really up to them, so be supportive and make it a problem you can talk about. Tell your child to ask to be excused while the class is working silently, to help him or her find a few private minutes to go.

If your child does start to show signs of constipation, you can take proactive steps to provide relief. Remember to increase fiber in your child's diet through healthy foods, regular meal schedules and supplementation. New Pedia-Lax Fiber Gummies are a daily fiber supplement that provide 4.5 grams of fiber with the daily recommended serving of three gummies. Just three great-tasting, sugar-free gummies give children a boost of 4.5 grams of fiber. Encourage him or her to also drink plenty of water, and if necessary, use a product like Pedia-Lax which offers a variety of kid-friendly laxatives for quick, overnight or gradual relief. For more tips, visit [www.Pedia-Lax.com](http://www.Pedia-Lax.com).

Now that you've done your homework, you and your family are ready for a healthy school year.