

Welcome Back to School!

Start the School Year off Right

The summer is coming to an end and for many of us the beginning of a new school year is welcomed. Summer is usually thought of as a fun and care free time of year but for our families, it can sometimes be difficult. With routines being off kilter and schedules different from the norm, summer sometimes brings a feeling of stress and chaos. In our house we look forward to the first day of school but in order for it to start out on the right foot, we make certain we have prepared ourselves!

Here are a few tips to ensure success!

Educate Teachers and Therapists

- Be sure that your child's educators have the book that every teacher, therapist, classroom nurse, doctor, parent, grandparent and caregiver needs to have access to! Anyone in the life of a loved one with Rett syndrome should own a copy of The Rett Syndrome Handbook. Order yours today!
- Has every teacher and therapist in your child's life registered for the IRSF Educators Network? This network provides the opportunity for professionals to communicate with each other, hear about new tips and techniques, learn of best practices and affords the chance to participate in monthly presentations that will not only assist those working with children with Rett syndrome, but also with a variety of other diagnoses. Encourage registration today by sharing this link or by sharing this invitation letter that has been created just for you to share!
- Send in an updated list of all medications and emergency contacts. Also be sure to send in an explanation of daily routines (bus, meals, medications, drop off/pick up, etc.) and be sure to highlight changes from the previous year.

Educate your Child's Peers

- We have found the best way to start off a new year is to introduce our daughter to the children she will be spending time with. We have found sending a letter home with the students opens doors to new friendships and strengthen old ones. Please feel free to use this letter and alter in any way you want!
- For those of you who wish to take this one step further, check out this "All About Me" book created by Susan Lee, mother of Alyssa and Alabama Regional Representative. This is sure to be something treasured and appreciated by all!
- You may want to encourage your child's classmates and peers to understand her and Rett syndrome more and help to alleviate their fear of asking questions. Remember, the more they understand, the more comfortable they will be. Share the following link or print out and send in copies of IRSF's children's informational coloring book. It is educational but also fun!

Additional Ideas for Success and Safety

- Be sure to inspect all equipment and accessories making sure everything is in working order, is adjusted correctly and has the right fit.
- Keep your child safe even when she is out of your care. A medical identification bracelet can save a life. This Lauren's

Hope website has been highly recommended by many IRSF families and volunteers.

- Start the new school year off on the right foot. Look at it as a fresh, clean slate with many possibilities and opportunities! Begin with a positive attitude and plan to have a year full of wonderful experiences for your child and you!
- When something is new, there are always kinks to iron out. Be flexible while also alert and on the ball about new classroom and bus schedules.
- Ask that a Daily Communication Log is created and sent between home and school. We have found a 3 ring binder to work best; the teacher adds a new form each day. We have also found that sending the voice output switch into school each morning with a message from home works great for morning circle! Then at the end of the day, our daughter can share a message from her teacher, assistant or therapist. The whole family enjoys this!
- Last, and so important, be sure to talk to your child at the end of each day to review what happened, ask questions and to remind your child what a smart and great kiddo they are!

Have a great 2012-2013 school year!