

Speaker 1 ([00:03](#)):

Welcome to Be Evolved, a podcast for parents and educators who prioritize developing possibility and expansion within the total educational process for themselves and their children or students. We invite you to listen to the podcast with your child or student in mind and with yourself at the center of the learning experience. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between educational expertise and research, translating it into practical action. Gaining knowledge plus taking action is what it means to be evolved.

Speaker 2 ([00:40](#)):

Hello everyone. Welcome to Be Evolved. This is our July episode, and I know many of us are enjoying summer days and nights right now, but soon enough we will be pivoting into back to school mode. So at Evolved, we provide services and resources to ensure students learn and live well. So we want you to have this information well ahead of time so that you can start thinking about it and then put things in place when the time comes to ensure that your child is all set with what you need as a family to make this transition. So today I have Amy Nathan joining us. She's the head of Student Services. Hi Amy. Hi. Thank you for having me. You're welcome. Thanks so much for coming and giving us so much of your knowledge and experience. So today we're going to provide parents with ideas on how to prepare your child for the upcoming school year, and we're going to discuss also how a tutor from Evolved Education Company can be a valuable partner in your journey.

([01:50](#)):

In addition, we are about to release another publication because we just love giving you all of the resources we can to help you on your journey. And this one is called Back to School Tips and Strategies, age Specific Guidelines by Mary Millie and the Evolve Team. It's going to be released on July 22nd. You can get it in your paperback or Kindle format, and it will really give you some of these tools that we're going to go over in a more broad sense, but it's certainly one to pick up and then start to take action on as a family so you'll be able to have the skills that you need so you can prepare for this very important time. I like to give a little analogy because I know everybody is on perhaps a different wavelength when it comes to back to school. Some parents I notice are very on top of things in terms of schedules and getting kids into their summer work early on and planning ahead and all of this.

([02:46](#)):

And there are other families who are going through their summer and sort of saying, we'll get to it when we get to it. And I think everything is valid. I do, and I think that it's important for us to teach what's happening with the child. So let me just give you an analogy that I like to teach and hopefully will help us. So the analogy is let's say that during the summer months you can relax and chill for a couple of weeks, maybe 12 weeks, maybe eight weeks. And when school starts, I'm going to get you up and you're going to run every single morning for about three to four miles and go through a full day. By the time you get to week three of this, you're going to probably feel as people do who endeavor to kickstart a fitness routine like this. Pretty sore, pretty tired, and pretty rundown.

([03:38](#)):

So what we know also to be true is that you will probably eventually work it out and you will get to the place where you can sustain that level of endurance, but it will definitely be uncomfortable and maybe you as an adult have skills to get through that uncomfortable time. And you can do things that kids maybe don't have experience yet of doing. But when we have a child going through that, all they really know is that this doesn't feel good. And so then we get into behaviors that are communicating that they are tired, they're whiny, they don't want to go to school. They also feel tired, so they're not really attending in class as well as they could. They're maybe getting behind on some learning. So these are things that are happening to them and it's eroding their confidence, it's eroding their ability to really learn at their best.

([04:32](#)):

So what we don't really want to do is get our kids in that situation. We want to think about things we can do a little bit along the way starting now in July to get our kids ready for what they're going to be dealing with in September. And by doing these things, which are very practical steps that you can take as a parent, that will help your family to function well too. You can ensure that your child will start school and be able to handle those demands and feel good about what they're going through. So that's really the goal. So let's get into some of this now and I'm going to ask Amy a series of questions. Stay with us. We're going to kind of talk first about just some at every age. You need to know these foundations. Then we're going to give you specific advice for each age group.

(05:19):

So early childhood being one to five years old, then elementary school, then middle school, then high school, and we'll sort of end with just a reminder of some of the resources and things that you can access here. Okay, so that's going to be the map of how we're going. Alright, so to start, Amy, could you please talk us through some of the mainstays that every family with a child going into school, whether they have a four-year-old or a 14-year-old can be thinking about when it's back to school time. Talk us through some of these important foundational skills.

Speaker 3 (05:52):

Sure. So for all children, understanding and managing time is crucial. Many kids are not even aware of how many weeks they have until school starts or how long their morning or bedtime routine takes. So we like to recommend a wall calendar to show the passage of larger sets of time along with something like a time timer is what we use that can help teach kids of all ages about time because time is pretty abstract for kids. So this makes it more concrete and visual even and they can really get a better sense of it. Another foundational concept is that every child will undergo a transition when going back to school. And transitions require building new schemas in the brain, which takes a lot of energy. So kids need to form awareness of new classrooms, new friends, new teachers, new supplies, materials and learning this process takes a lot of cognitive demand.

(07:02):

So it's important to set up a supportive environment at home to help the child or adolescent brain during this transition. And another thing I think is super important is previewing. And so for younger children, this might involve visiting the school or playing in the playground, having play dates with school friends to familiarize themselves. And for middle school and high school students, it could mean previewing subject area content, getting their school bag ready early, establishing a morning routine, establishing some evening routines, and just really getting a sense of what that looks like before school starts. And I think finally, families and especially parents need to manage the volume of the forms, the paperwork, the emails required at the start of school. I mean, I know as a parent I get inundated with that too. We'll be posting strategies on social media in August to help with this. And the key message for all our families really is to allow time and energy to adapt to the demands of going back to school for both the parents and the students.

Speaker 2 (08:11):

That makes really good sense. I love all of those key foundational things. So just to restate, we're teaching kids about time. We can do that right now in the summer, just add a wall calendar in your kitchen area, let the kids write down what's happening and when school's starting, so they get that really good visual reminder. In addition, help them with knowing how much time has passed, maybe timing, how much they're reading in a day, or if they're practicing their math, timing that so they can really see the passage and experience the passage of time. Working on understanding that when they go back to school, that new schema that they're developing takes a lot of energy. And so just allowing for some of that energy to be

there in the beginning of the year is important. And then previewing, which is really helpful because you want to make sure that helps light those schemas down.

(09:02):

They can preview the class, just look around, preview the material, it helps them so they have less energy to give in the beginning of the school. And then we have the volume of forms. I have a couple of interesting things that I've just learned from some of our parents are our best teachers and they've really taught me a few things. So I know you and I and Becky and Caitlin will get together and share some of the strategies that we use to stay on top of everything that's going on with all of that. Because when parents are overwhelmed, it's usually a more stressful time at home too. So taking care of the whole family is our business. Alright, let's get into every age group. Let's talk a little bit about early childhood, which we qualify as anyone from one to five years old or so. Can you tell us a little bit about what parents with children this age group can do as they begin the school year, even if their kids aren't going to school, so to speak? What is a good thing to be doing right now coming into September?

Speaker 3 (09:58):

So I think for early childhood it's important to get a comprehensive picture of the child's overall development. So for parents, they can certainly start developing routines very early on. But for us as tutors, we like to use developmental checklists to assess the young students in their daily living, their pre-academic skills, their expressive and receptive language skills, fine and gross motor, their temperament. That helps guide us. So I'm going to talk a little bit about what our evolved tutors do, but there are also things parents can do that is very much in conjunction with this. So our assessments help our tutors address educational areas like and executive function. We also have a number of related service providers that we can refer to for other areas of development as well. And our tutors are very much aware that skill building is essential at this age. So we support that with age appropriate activities, parents can learn how to engage with their children in an education forward way through our tutor reports, our tutors are sending and speaking with parents directly, very extensive feedback to help them engage their children when the tutor is not there. Caitlin Hassan, our director of early childhood and elementary programs here at Evolved Education is meeting with families. She's great and she is currently meeting with families this summer to prepare them for the back to school transition. And we both have young children and I really love learning from her. I have her on speed dial sometimes, so very grateful for her.

Speaker 2 (11:44):

Yes, me too. I feel like it's always good to just have somebody to check in with your child and teach you what you could be paying attention to. And I think that's a lot of what we do at the early childhood age groups is just helping parents know what to look for and then what they could be doing with their children activity wise and routine wise to promote all of those areas that you just talked about. So I agree that that's really, really helpful. So then we have of course our next age group, which are certainly going to be starting school, and this starts at kindergarten, goes through age five. It's our elementary school age group. What are some things that we do, let's say, let's just focus I guess on in parting some of the ways in which the tutor group works with these children and really partners with parents to promote the learning that's needed at this time in their lives.

Speaker 3 (12:36):

So for students kindergarten through grade five, we focus on thorough assessment. We really want to understand who this child is. We want to understand their reading skills, not just the level, but also how they cue and what they need in terms of phonological awareness, phonics fluency and comprehension for writing. We look at their vocabulary, their sentence construction, their paragraph writing and essay formation. We use evidence-based models like SRSD, writing and Writing revolution or the Hockman

method to build key skills in these areas. In this writing area, our tutors document the skills and refer back to them helping students recall and use them independently. I like to think of writing instruction. It's cyclical, it's not linear, so it comes back. You're always going back to refer back to an original sentence skill. You're always revisiting because sentences are really the building blocks of composition. So you always need to practice those sentence level skills at varying levels. In math, we use a variety of approaches and resources starting with assessment and continuing to assess the student skills along the way. We ensure that students are hands-on with math. Manipulatives are really important for this age group and our goal is really to support students within their school curriculum while also providing a strong foundation in math concepts.

Speaker 2 ([14:11](#)):

Yes, I think that's great. And I've learned a lot also from just reading what our tutors write and they are so skilled at assessment. And I love also how they really take into account the student's program, which I know you'll talk about I'm sure for the middle school and high school, but really understanding the requirements that they have in their school program and really building the skills towards that, which are sometimes, as we know in the class setting, the children are exposed to all of this, but they may not actually master all of those skills. And the tutoring really bridges some of those gaps that just happen to happen, especially at this age group, everyone is at a little bit of a different place. So I think that's always really exciting to see and this is something that we can definitely do with students leading into the start of the school year. So I think that's wonderful. Could you now discuss our middle and our high school students? So these are our sixth graders through eighth graders to start. And could you talk to us a little bit about how the tutors work with this particular age group, especially as we get back into school?

Speaker 3 ([15:10](#)):

Yes, of course. So I'm biased as I taught middle school for many, many years, so this is my bread and butter age group. But for middle school students in particular, building a rapport with their tutors is crucial. So really developing a relationship with somebody they can trust is important for us and the work we do. So framing tutoring as a bonus rather than something that's addressing a deficit is important. So we really focus on the strengths the student has and use them to improve the areas of challenge. And we frame it up as such. Learning to learn is a major focus for us too. Incorporating integrated executive function, coaching and academic skills is really key for this age group. This is when the workload starts to amp up. It's not elementary school anymore. They're teachers are preparing them for what they're going to see in high school and college and beyond. And this is definitely the transition period for many of our students. So we really want to reassure our parents that an expert is overseeing their child's learning during these critical years and allowing parents to be supportive parents, allowing them to be parents, not the teachers. So that's the middle school I always get, oh, you're teaching middle school? Oh my goodness, I could never, I love it.

Speaker 2 ([16:35](#)):

I'm the same as you. So I understand that. I really do. I think it's just fascinating because there's such a wide range of work you can be doing in this age group, and I think it definitely presents a lot of challenges, which I love facing with families. I was just talking with some kids that are going from sixth grade to seventh grade and there's just a lot of learning that has to happen in those age groups about the social and the emotional and the physical and what is safe behavior, what's not. And it's just tremendous amounts of learning that can be happening. So it's really great to have a partner in all that. Okay, so now let's talk about our real teens who are definitely in it. This is our ninth grade through 12th grade, and can we demand that they work on back to school transition planning? Can we say, Hey guys, we're going to work on getting back to school. Is that the approach is a little bit of a rhetorical question. I know I'm asking, but please get into that one.

Speaker 3 ([17:25](#)):

Yeah. So I've also taught high school and high schoolers and teenagers. They need to be involved in leading their learning journey while also having parental guidance along the way too. So our tutors care for teens learning by really getting to know them, encouraging self-advocacy, which is super important, and building skills and confidence. So our tutor teams delve into the school curriculum and help students succeed within their unique school environments. We recognize different courses might look different depending where the student is, and our tutors will really customize the instruction in that way. The tutor reports definitely provide parents with valuable insights, but we also like to involve the high school students in these reports too, so that they have the immediate feedback after their sessions to see how they did. And we like to involve them in the process as well. Should a parent want them to be parents can always reach out to us for support. Becky Reback, our head of middle school and high school programming often meets with families to help them implement effective learning strategies and structure. So she is definitely a great resource to reach out to for that kind of support.

Speaker 2 ([18:40](#)):

Definitely I would categorize both of you in that regard. I feel like it's such a good team to give a lot of practical strategies and really allow kids to have more independence. But also, I've been talking a lot about the word interdependence, which is something I'm definitely going for with my teenagers. I'm promoting them to have skills, but then I also want them to provide value to their communities and to the world and know how their own strengths can really facilitate some of the improvements in the world and things like this. So I think it's important. So I just would like to sort of end this episode just by reminding everyone that you have a resource here at Evolved Education and this podcast be Evolved is something we produce every month for our community, and we are very happy to have you listening and if you have any questions for us, that's what we're here for.

([19:32](#)):

So we really always want to be really responsive to whatever parents are going through. So we're very active on social to exchange ideas that way. And we also are happy to have you come to our website and learn more about us. Don't forget to check out our Back to School Tips and strategies, age specific guidelines, which is releasing on July 22nd, which at the time of this podcast is about a week away. It's packed with strategies to help your children head back to school with confidence. So Amy, thank you so much for these valuable insights and for being here today. If people would like to be in touch with you to facilitate tutoring or any services for their children or just learn more about what Evol has to offer, how can they find you?

Speaker 3 ([20:15](#)):

You can find me on our website or you can email me at amy@evolveded.com.

Speaker 2 ([20:21](#)):

Thank you, Amy. Alright everybody, enjoy the rest of your summer fun and we'll see you in August.

Speaker 1 ([20:31](#)):

Thank you so much for joining us today on Be Evolved. We hope you learn something and that you can take direct action toward helping your student to learn. Well. If you enjoyed this content, please consider subscribing or writing a review. This is how this gets to others who could benefit from it. Our education systems are complex, vast, and various, and the student you're parenting and teaching is unique. Thus, if you could benefit from one-to-one holistic guidance provided by educational experts, please visit us at www.evolvededucationcompany.com. If you have any questions you'd like to ask or ideas for this show,

This transcript was exported on Jul 12, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

please email us at admin@evolveded.com. That's A-D-M-I-N at E-V-O-L-V-E-D-E d.com. We are so pleased to serve you and connect you with the best educational expertise.