



New Schedules and New Routines

It's hard to believe that it's back to school time AGAIN (eye-roll and sigh for all kids; loud cheer for all parents). Well, here we are, back to the grind. Calendars are being filled with appointments and obligations, activities are scheduled and Mom and Dad's official taxi service is at peak performance.

We are adaptable creatures by nature, capable of change...but how flexible are we? How many responsibilities can a human manage? When can it be *too much*?

The truth is, even computers crash...therefore, we all have a breaking point.

Although the introduction to new routines can bring excitement, it also can induce stress and anxiety. The element of a schedule and routine, used

effectively, can foster organization and predictability...the anxiety monster's arch nemesis.

So, how does a family run a tight ship without experiencing a Titanic breaking point? I hope some of the following suggestions can assist you in your navigation...

1. Find a scheduling tool that works for you.

Are you a traditional organizer that requires a pencil and paper approach or are you tech savvy and prefer an electronic method? Regardless of choice, it's important for everyone to be on the same 'page' and access the information to avoid double booking or an oversight. In other words, communication is *EXTREMELY IMPORTANT*.

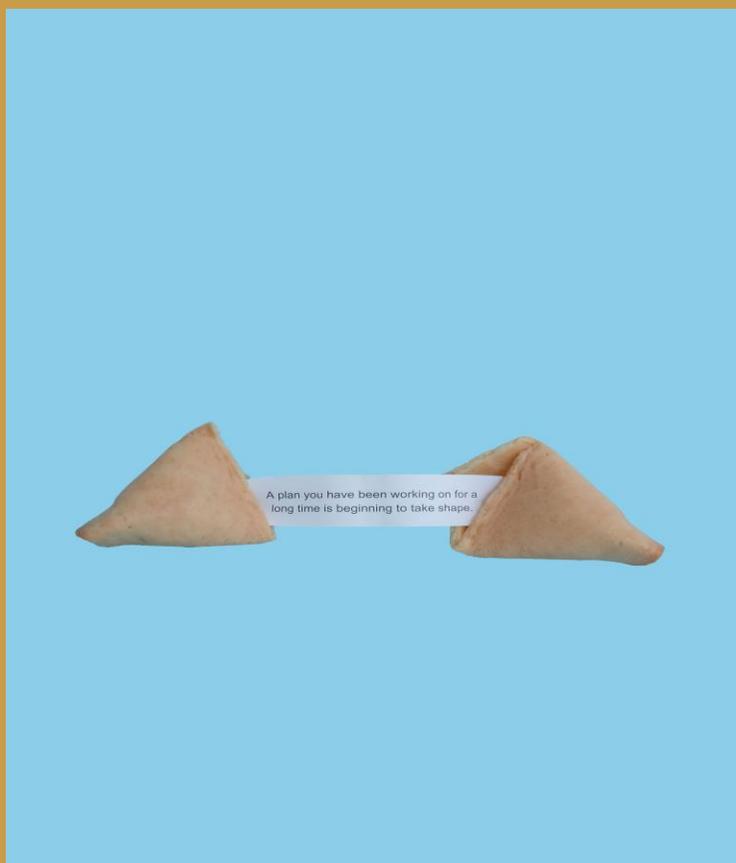
2. Delegate

ASK FOR HELP. Tap into the natural supports around you. Join a carpool or ask family/friends to help out. There is no shame in asking for help, remember, it truly does take a village. Parents, if you find yourself doing too much in the morning and at night to help your child/ children get ready, then think of ways to raise their responsible behavior in the process. Utilize incentives to motivate them, or make a game/competition out of the expectations. Create visuals for them to understand their responsibilities. Set up the stage for success because they are capable.

3. Know Your Limits

Being ambitious is a fabulous quality, but sometimes we bite off more than we can chew. If your child is overscheduled, they may not have the ability to articulate that. Signs of burnout can include: irritability, push back when expected to attend an activity, falling ill more often, anxiety before an activity, being excessively tired, or observing your child as being 'down' or unmotivated and

withdrawn/isolative. Find the time to hold a discussion around your observations and reinforce that it's okay to take a break. Know that the solution does not have to be "all or nothing", perhaps a more creative resolution can be discovered by including the coach or activity leader in the problem-solving process.



In this ever-evolving fast-paced world, a healthy schedule and routine can eliminate anxiety, discord and disappointment. Find what works best for you and your family. If a plan isn't working out, take it back to the drawing board and try again. Above all, remember that the process should bring joy and excitement versus anxiety and irritability. Good

Luck with all of your new adventures this upcoming season!

Warmly,

Miss Gretchen MS, NCC, LPC