



INSTITUTE OF HEARTMATH®

Empowering Heart-Based Living

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## Institute of HeartMath® Helping Families, Students Kick-Start New School Year

BOULDER CREEK, CA. – August, 19, 2010 – Getting kids to bed earlier and starting new routines in the transition from summer to a new school year often can cause turbulence for families. A projected 56 million K to 12th students are making that transition this fall in the United States, and nearly 20 percent of sixth to 12th-grade students have been off track academically, according to the latest figures from the U.S. Census Bureau. To help families start the school year on a positive note, the research and education organization known as the [Institute of HeartMath®](#) (IHM) suggests some tools families can practice to better handle stress and cope with the challenges of a new term.

“If we can intervene right at the start of the school year to help children understand how to manage change and their emotions, it will help them learn resiliency in dealing with stress later in life,” says behavioral psychologist Deborah Rozman, Ph.D., who serves on IHM’s scientific advisory board. “It’s just as critical for parents to learn basic emotional self-regulation tools to effectively set an example for children.”

With nearly 20 years of researching the science of emotions, IHM has identified a physiological inner state called *coherence*, in which the heart, brain and nervous system are in sync, resulting in stress reduction, improved immune function and increased decision-making abilities. Although stressful situations such as putting rebellious children to bed earlier or helping kids adjust to more difficult homework and new surroundings often can be challenging, learning how to access inner coherence can help ease the process, Rozman said. An inner coherent state can be accessed with several research-based tools IHM has developed.

The Institute of HeartMath offers free tips and tools for parents and those who work with children on its [HeartMath My Kids!](#) Facebook page. The newest resource the institute is introducing for children is the Heartshift™ Tool, which is designed to aid their emotional development.

### **The Heartshift™ Tool for ages seven to eleven:**

This tool helps children calm down and think more clearly when things upset them. It can help children shift from a negative emotion to a positive one. Parents can teach children this tool using the following steps.

**Step 1.** Notice what you are feeling. Take a moment and ask yourself, “How am I feeling? Then say out loud what you are feeling.

**Step 2.** Shift to your heart. Put two fingers on your forehead and then move them from your head to your heart while saying, “Focus on the area of my heart.”

**Step 3.** Breathe a feeling of calmness. Breathe slowly and easily. Imagine the air flowing in and out of your heart area. Take your time breathing in and out. Do this three to five times. What changes did you notice in your body? How do you feel now?

A [full guide and introduction of this tool](#) is available at [facebook.com/HeartMathMyKids](https://facebook.com/HeartMathMyKids).

The institute also has a number of beneficial tools for parents and younger children that are available on its Web site at [www.heartmath.org](http://www.heartmath.org). These tools use a similar format to help individuals shift to a coherent state.

### **The Quick Coherence® Technique for adults:**

The heart is a primary generator of rhythm in the body, influencing brain processes that control the nervous system, cognitive function and emotion. The Quick Coherence Technique centers on the heart to access the conscious control of emotional states.

**Step 1.** Heart Focus: Focus your attention on the area around your heart, or the area in the center of your

chest.

**Step 2. Heart Breathing:** Breathe deeply but normally, and feel as if your breath is coming in and out through your heart area.

**Step 3. Heart Feeling:** As you maintain your Heart Focus and Heart Breathing, activate a positive feeling. Breathe this feeling in and out of your heart area.

A full guide and introduction of this technique is available at:

[www.heartmath.org/QuickCoherenceTechniqueforAdults](http://www.heartmath.org/QuickCoherenceTechniqueforAdults)

### **Shift and Shine® Technique for ages three to six:**

Modeling positive emotions for children as young as three can help them begin learning emotion-management skills. Start this exercise by telling your child who you care about. Now ask your child who he or she cares about. Thinking about these positive feelings of care will lay a foundation as you guide your child through this technique using the following steps.

**Step 1. Heart Attention:** Begin by putting your attention on the area around your heart or the center of your chest.

**Step 2. Heart Breathing:** Now pretend to breathe in and out of your heart area. Take three slow breaths.

**Step 3. Heart Feeling:** Think of someone or something that makes you feel happy. Feel that happy feeling in your heart and then shine that feeling to someone or something special.

A full guide and introduction of this technique is available at:

[www.heartmath.org/ShiftandShineTechniqueforAges3-6](http://www.heartmath.org/ShiftandShineTechniqueforAges3-6)

### **Wild Ride to the Heart™ board game for ages four and older:**

One of the latest and most exciting tools from IHM lets children learn emotion-management skills in a fun and creative way that families can practice together. With IHM's new *Wild Ride to the Heart™* board game, families are able to spend time together as the children learn and explore different emotional experiences.

Children can develop greater awareness of their emotions with Wild Ride and learn self-regulation. They have the opportunity to pause and actually understand a variety of emotional reactions, rather than simply experience the commotion they often cause in their daily lives and move on without confronting them. The game helps children develop emotional resilience and establish family connections through its simple and fun-to-play board-game format. The sharing experience of *Wild Ride to the Heart* helps everyone – parents, children and siblings – better understand and communicate about emotions in a fun, unique and low-cost way.

*Wild Ride to the Heart* was developed incorporating breakthrough scientific research on emotions and learning to help children find the same positive emotional state that has been proven to build emotional flexibility and resilience with these benefits:

- Helps children begin to identify and understand their emotions.
- Helps children in their relationships with family and friends at home and school.
- Helps teach children emotion self-regulation to better control their moods.
- Brings family and friends closer.



“Big transitions like starting a new school year don’t always have to escalate into unnecessary stress,” psychologist Rozman said. “Learning simple approaches to manage our emotions can help us create important habits that serve us well at school and for the rest of our lives.”

More information on these back-to-school tools and techniques, and the Institute of HeartMath’s® scientifically validated stress solutions are available at <http://www.heartmath.org>. For more information about the *Wild Ride to the Heart™* board game, go to <http://www.heartmath.org/wildridetotheheart>.

**About the Institute of HeartMath:**

The Institute of HeartMath, [www.heartmath.org](http://www.heartmath.org), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization dedicated to teaching the principles of heart-based living around the world and promoting global coherence by inspiring people to connect with the intelligence and guidance of their hearts. IHM has been conducting scientific research on the physiology of emotions and the science of the heart for nearly two decades. IHM was founded in 1991 by Doc Childre, a world leader in stress reduction and emotion-management research. Through its research and education divisions, the institute has developed practical tools, educational programs and services – collectively known as the HeartMath System – for the mental, emotional and physical benefit of children through seniors without regard to their social, economic or cultural status. IHM research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals such as *American Journal of Cardiology*, *Stress Medicine*, *Preventive Cardiology*, *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, *Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science* and *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*. For more information about IHM Education and Professional Development programs visit [www.heartmath.org/education](http://www.heartmath.org/education) or call (831) 338-8500 or (800) 711-6221. You can learn more about IHM's latest available resources by joining its social networking pages on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), as well as its [YouTube](#) channel. IHM's latest resource page, [HeartMath My Kids!](#), is dedicated to providing all caretakers of children with practical information.

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