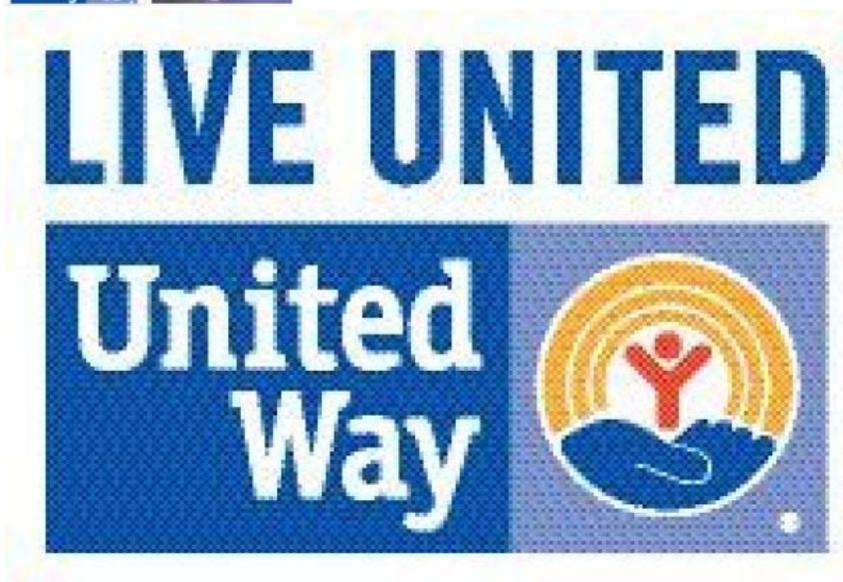




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## GUEST COMMENTARY: Easy transition for successful school year



Live United logo

August 24, 2014 12:00 am • [Shellie Dell](#)

Earlier bedtimes, packed lunchboxes and kids at the bus stop with book bags filled with new supplies are a sure sign that summer is over and it's time to go back to school.

As the fourth week of August begins, most region students have started their transition into the new academic year. New routines are being established, homework regimens are being set, after-school activities are gearing up, and parent orientation nights are just around the corner. It's a fresh start, but it can be a trying process.

Is quality after-school care a concern? Consider your local YMCA, YWCA, Boys & Girls Clubs or other community agency. These providers throughout the region offer convenient, affordable, safe and dependable childcare for working families. The curriculum typically includes games, arts and crafts, and homework assistance in a structured environment offering parents peace of mind.

Is obtaining affordable after school care a barrier? The Child Care Development Fund program helps struggling families gain access to child care, enabling parents to stay working, helping them maintain financial stability. For more information on the CCDF program, call (800) 299-1627.

Are your child's nutrition habits on the right track to ensure success in school? The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends children start the day off with a healthy breakfast. Students who eat breakfast tend to have higher attendance records, score higher on tests and exhibit better concentration. Keeping lunchtime interesting also helps. For starters, plan lunch menus with your child. Encourage them to pack items they enjoy. Offer choices that vary in protein sources.

Also, make sure your child gets regular physical activity. Exercise promotes a healthy body weight, supports learning and the development of social skills. It also builds self-esteem. If your family lacks the financial resources to access nutritious foods, contact resources such as your local food bank, Northwest Indiana Community Action or the Indiana Parenting Institute.

Does your child exercise safety practices before, during and after school? The National Safety Council recommends children allow plenty of time to reach the bus stop, refrain from the use of personal electronics while walking, know their bus number and driver's name to ensure they are on the right bus. and maintain a safe distance from the street while waiting for their bus to arrive.

Does your child know what to do if there is an emergency on school campus? Obtain a copy of the school district's emergency guidelines and review them with your child. Taking an active role in campus safety procedures will make a difference when it matters most.

Is your older child babysitting for younger children after school? Consider enrolling him in a babysitting course offered through the American Red Cross. The online course is designed for ages 11 and older. It provides the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and responsibly care for infants and children up to age 10. It takes about four hours to complete the course, and it makes learning fun with lots of videos and interactive games.

The transition from "pool to school" can be a tough one. Parents can help their children manage the increased pace of life by planning ahead, being realistic and maintaining a positive attitude. Let's work together to make sure our children are given every opportunity to learn and succeed in this school year and beyond.

Shellie Dell is donor relations and marketing manager for Lake Area United Way. The opinions are the writer's.

### Peggy's Attic in need of school supplies for foster children

Several local agencies are teaming up to make sure children in foster care are ready to return to school, but they need your help.



**FOR KIDS IN FOSTER CARE**

**Peggy's Attic**  
**701 N Pecos Rd.**  
**(near Ianza)**  
**10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.**  
**Mon. - Thu., Sat.**

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