

COVID-19

Coping with Back to School



The coronavirus pandemic has caused disruption to our daily lives and children and parents are feeling these changes deeply. Returning to school may be welcoming for some, however others may be feeling anxious or frightened. Being away from school and returning to an environment that has changed can be anxiety-provoking, not only for children but for parents too. Deciding whether your child should go back to school is not an easy decision for parents to make. If you have decided that you would like to send your child back to school, you and your child may be feeling differently about the situation.

Tips for parents to help decrease stress while navigating the transition back to school:

Stop Allowing Yourself to Think the Worst – Although this is an unpredictable and worrisome time, it is important to not allow yourself to think of all the “what-if’s”. Be practical in your thinking and reasoning.

Manage your Own Mental Health – Practice self-care (mindfulness, meditation, yoga, exercise, adequate sleep). How you manage your anxiety impacts the emotional health and wellness of your child. You are your child’s most important role model. They are watching how you manage stress.

Model Coping Strategies for Your Child – Include your child in ways to cope when you feel stressed such as talking with friends or family, enjoying a good laugh, finding positive activities to fill your time, regular exercise etc.

Make Yourself Available – Your child may want to come home and “debrief” about their school day. Create space and time for talking in different ways, such as going on a walk together or at dinner time.

Here are tips to help your children navigate some of the emotions they may be facing with going back to school:

Establish a Routine – Routines are comforting for children which can help reduce stress and anxiety.

Talk About Changes Together – Find out how they are feeling. Try to answer their questions in a reassuring way. Just talking things through can help your child feel calmer.

Validate Feelings – Sometimes we can’t solve our child’s concerns, but we can make them to feel understood and supported.

Focus on What Can be Control – There are many unknowns during this unpredictable time. Helping your child identify what they can control can help them be more present in the moment and reduce anxiety. Work together with your child by getting organised, making healthy lunches, preparing their school bag, etc.

Stay Positive – Even if they are worried about returning to school, there may be some things they are looking forward to (i.e. reconnecting with friends, finding out what teacher they have etc.). Talk about some of the exciting things returning to school may bring.

Positive Home Activities – Spend time doing activities your child enjoys to do such as biking, playing or cooking together. Doing these activities can give your child a break from any worries they have.



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