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REDUCING SEPARATION ANXIETY

tips for parents

The next school term or year may feel unusual or strange for lots of children, but by working together, schools and parents can help to reduce any anxieties children may have.

Here are our tips and guidance for parents, to help support children's transition back to school following Covid-19.



Inform and plan

Read through all the information you have received from your child's school about the return so you feel prepared. If you have been sent transition activities and resources about your child's new teacher/class/year group, go through these with your child so that you can both feel informed and can get excited about a new beginning.

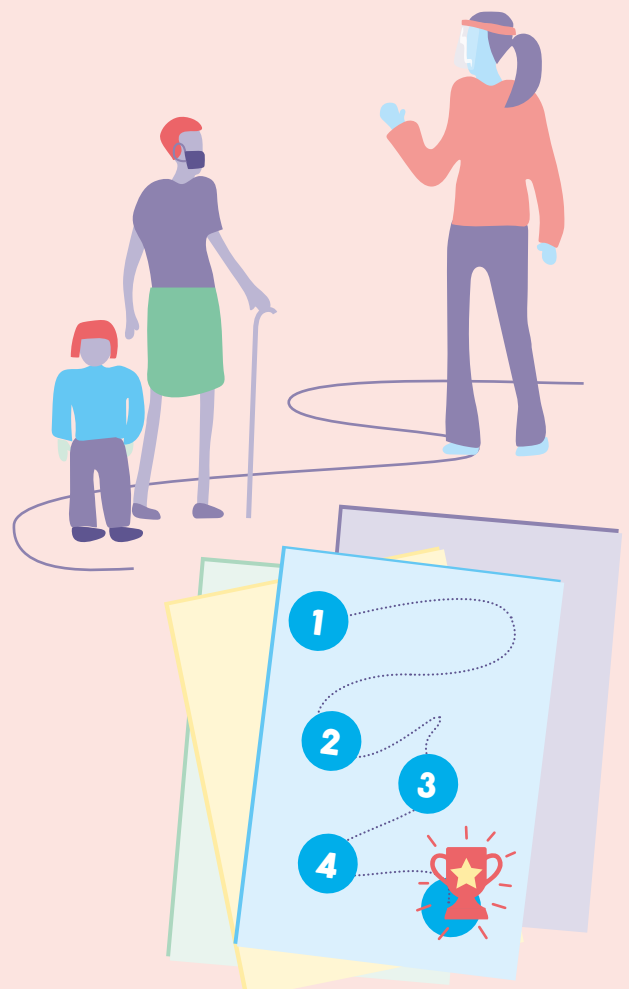
Routine is helpful for children so make a to-do list or timetable for the run up to the new term. You might want to include ideas like making a card for their new teacher, making sure their uniform still fits, buying new school shoes, labelling all their stationery, or planning your journey.



Communication is key

Talk to your child ahead of any changes so that they are aware of what to expect in advance. If the school has sent you information or videos about the changes in place for September, talk these through with your child. Explain to them what might be different, focusing on the positives.

It might help to go through this in the format of a school day e.g. *We will go to school a bit later than usual and your class will line up to get their temperature checked to make sure you are healthy. Your teacher will be there waiting for you and will be wearing a face mask - they will be so excited to see you again.*



Getting ready for school - timetable

Name: _____ Date: _____

Days of the week	Morning	Don't forget to get your uniform, shoes and bag ready!	Afternoon
		Lunch	
First day!			You get to see your friends soon!



Positivity

When discussing the return to school, always try to do so in a positive way, especially when your child may be able to hear you. The teachers are working hard to prepare for the return to school, so have faith that it will be OK and show that faith to your child.

Children can be perceptive and may pick up on any anxiety or negativity you may be feeling yourself. While this is totally natural given the circumstances, if you have any concerns, try to address them with the school without your child around. Instead, talk to your child about things they can look forward to, like seeing their friends every day, a lesson they enjoy or meeting their new teacher. Encourage them to have a positive attitude about starting school.



Reflect

Look back at the lockdown period with your child. Think about what you have done together, what you have both learnt about yourselves, what was difficult about it, and what was fun about it.

Make plans with your child to continue some of those activities once they are back at school. For example, you may have enjoyed going for bike rides during the lockdown so plan one in for the weekend after school start as a treat to look forward to.

Three reasons I am excited about school...

1.

2.

3.



One thing I will continue to do after lockdown is...

Parent/carer:

Child:

Together:



Short and sweet school drop off

When school starts back, it is important to incorporate the above advice in your drop off. Whilst it is understandable to feel worried or anxious about leaving your child in the morning, children can often pick up on this, and this can sometimes make them feel anxious about you leaving too.

Plan who might be best to drop off the child at school in these circumstances; a parent/ carer, grandparent or childminder, if that is usual. At the time of drop off, remember to keep it short and sweet. Once the familiar faces of friends and teachers are there to greet your child at the gate, say goodbye and leave so they can focus on the potential excitement of school rather than sadness or anxiety of a parent leaving.

Although the majority of children will be keen to get in the classroom after the long break, if your child is still feeling anxious about you leaving beyond the first few days, discuss this with your child's teacher. It may be necessary to make some further plans to support your child with this.



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