

A less-stressful back-to-school

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September 1, 2021 — Back-to-school time can be a time of excitement as students look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones, settling into new routines, and having new experiences. But it can also be a time of uncertainty, worry and stress. Adding to the stress this year might be nervousness about COVID-19 and, for some people, stepping back [into](#) a classroom regularly for the first time in over a year.

We've put together some tips to help make the transition back to school less stressful for your children.

(Submitted by Ailsa McLellan, [Confident Parents: Thriving Kids—Anxiety Program](#))

- **Establish routines:** Begin following the routines you want to follow during the school year now. Start a bedtime routine that allows your child to get enough sleep during the school year; start going to bed and waking up at times that are in line with the school routine.
- **Problem-solve and plan:** Validate your child's concerns and express confidence in their ability to attend school—then brainstorm ways to cope with stressful situations. For example, you can say something like: "I know the worries get loud when you think about starting school, and at the same time I know you can be brave. Let's think of some ways you can handle situations you're worried about." You can also role-play the situation together as a family.
- **Pay attention to bravery:** Praise and reward your child's bravery each step of the way, no matter how small.
- **Stay calm:** You may notice yourself feeling anxious or frustrated when your child becomes worried. It's important to stay calm and try to keep your body language and tone to model your confidence in your child's ability to be brave.
- **Team up against the anxiety:** Reach out to people who can be part of your team to support your child attending school.
 - Come up with a consistent approach to supporting your child to face their fears.
 - Let your child's school know the ways you're encouraging your child to be brave at school. Involve necessary support when possible.

For Post-Secondary Students

(Submitted by Sonia Heer, [Healthy Minds, Health Campuses Program](#))

- **Introduce yourself to your professors:** Getting to know your professors helps establish a relationship and may help you feel more comfortable when seeking help for course work and/or other supports.
- **Discover resources:** Get to know what resources and activities are offered on campus that might be helpful for you. Look for counselling services, peer support groups, support line numbers, or workshops.
- **Create a realistic routine:** Be sure your routine includes plenty of breaks and balance between academics, work, and free time.
- **Connect with friends:** Visit and talk to friends on campus to ease the transition from online to in-person learning. Take advantage of the school events promoting social connection.
- **Get to know yourself:** What self-care practices work the best for you? Explore different activities and practices that can help manage your stress and/or anxiety.
- **Explore.** Find a spot on campus that you love. Spending all day on campus can be tiring; try finding a spot on campus where you can relax in between classes.
- **Volunteer:** This is easily one of the best ways to meet new people, gain new skills, and get to know your campus!

For more ideas and information, visit:

- [Confident Parents: Thriving Kids—Anxiety](#)
- [BounceBack for Youth](#)
- [Healthy Minds, Health Campuses](#)
- [Anxiety Canada](#)

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