



Preparing for Return to School

After an extended period of time at home, returning to school for children can elicit a range of feelings. From feeling excited and eager, to feeling anxious and fearful, or even a combination of these feelings. Some things that may help ease children back into school successfully may include:

- **Talking about going back to school.** This could be conversations about which parts of school your child looks forward to and enjoys, and which parts of school worries them. Most children tend to experience some levels of stress and worry about returning to school after an extended period of absence. This could be an opportunity to normalise some of these worries and reassure your child they can overcome those worries when given time to settle in.
- **Setting up a back-to-school routine prior to returning to school.** This could be creating healthy and consistent sleep habits where bedtime and wakeup time mirror what would happen on a normal school day. You might also want to create a "getting ready" chart that plans out the tasks needed to be done in the evenings and mornings to get ready for school (e.g. packing a school bag the night before, laying out the school uniform before bed, getting dressed by yourself, etc).
- **Encourage a sense of belonging and fostering social connections.** This could be pairing your child with a buddy, such as another student in their class, who can be their social contact during the school day.
- **Be enthusiastic and excited about your child's return to school.** This will help set them up for a successful experience.
- **Reassure and reinforce to your child that they will cope with school, and have already done so in the past.** Remember, you and your child have already had practice getting back into school mode following the Summer holiday break. Refer to past experiences of success to instill confidence in your child that they can do it again.
- More information about managing return to school anxiety can be accessed here: <https://theconversation.com/back-to-school-anxiety-here-are-seven-simple-solutions-82049>