



Tips for returning to school

Now that there appears to be a plan of action to reopen schools in a staged approach you and your child may be experiencing a mix of emotions. There is no magic answer but there are some steps you can take to help your child or young person with the transition back into the school setting.

What will school be like?

At this stage it is still unclear as how schools will reopen. What we do know is that the classroom will look different than before the pandemic. Regardless of your child's age, it is important that when you have a clear understanding of how your child's school will recommence you talk to your child or young person about what to expect when they return to the school environment.

Social distancing

With smaller children social distancing will be a challenge as they normally enjoy close proximity with their classmates. Using role play is a great way of helping them understand, so try to encourage them to imagine they have a magic bubble round them that will burst if they get too close or try magic footsteps that they can stand on so they can get an idea of space.

Look at the good points

Point out the positives of smaller classrooms such as the teacher having more time for them, more space to play, not having such long waits for activities.

Health and safety

Continue to practice safety measures such as washing their hands and coughing into their inner elbow so this becomes normal practice in your family.

Reconnecting

Organise a play date on line so they can reconnect with classmates and start to feel excited about returning to the classroom.

Reminders of important skills

Important social skills that may have been less important during lockdown such as sharing, taking turns, compromising and negotiating can be practised by playing board games as a family to prepare your child for the classroom setting.





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Role model

Remember you are your child's first teacher. Your child learns a lot from you, as their parent you will be teaching them a range of skills that you might not even realise, such as how to interact with others. You are an important role model to your child.

Listen

Listening is an important part of communication. Ask your child about any worries or concerns they may have about returning to school. Rather than talking at them, listen to what they have to say and see if you can chat through ways they can overcome those feelings together.

Time together

Remind your child of the positive family traditions that you have all enjoyed as a family, such as cooking and eating together, playing games, getting exercise and all the other things you have enjoyed during the pandemic. Let your children know these things will continue even though you will have less time together.

Anxiety

Your child/young person may experience re-entry anxiety as they try to adjust to a more normal environment.

The future

Take your young person's concerns about their future, family finances, falling behind academically and fitting back in with their peer group seriously. Allow them space to talk, remind them of the positives that have come from the situation such as a greater appreciation of friends and family, not putting such emphasis on material items and remind them that most of their friends will have the same concerns as they do.

If they appear unmotivated remind them good grades will help them have greater choice when they do leave education.

Reassurance

Reassure your child that restrictions starting to ease is a good sign that the virus is under control. Remind them that they can always talk to you about any worries they have.

