

Six Tips to Support Your Child's Mental Wellness and Prepare for the Start of the School Year

Heading back to school is always a time of transition, but this year the changes will be much more far-reaching for most of us. Here are six tips to support your child's mental wellness and help them prepare for the start of the school year.

1



Shine a spotlight on what is still within your child's control as opposed to focusing on what's not.

As your child prepares to return to school, they may be feeling like there is little to nothing within their control. This can leave a child feeling helpless and discouraged. A helpful way to deal with this is to help your child to identify areas where they still have some control.

2

Recognize the comforting rhythm of routine.

Children find routines reassuring. They provide a comforting and predictable rhythm to daily living. And, in these uncertain times, that element of predictability is especially welcome.



3

Help your child to learn about and understand the new rules of heading back to school.

Information is power. The more your child understands about the policies and procedures that will be in place in the classroom, the more confident they will feel about heading back to school.

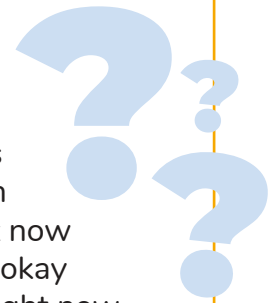
Back to
School
Mental Health Kit



4

Encourage your child to ask lots of questions.

Your child is likely to ask a lot of tough questions about returning to school this year. In some cases, you may feel unsure about how to answer these questions—or there simply might not even be answers to your child’s questions. In this case, it’s important to be honest with your child: to let them know that you don’t have all the answers right now because even the experts are still trying to figure everything out. It’s okay not to have all the answers because none of us has all the answers right now.



5

Help your child to identify a safe person at school.



Every child needs a “safe person” at school—ideally it is someone they can trust and who knows them; someone they can turn to for help in solving a problem or dealing with a difficult situation. Considering the pandemic measure in place this year, if possible, encourage your child to use their classroom teacher for this purpose. Speak to them about sharing with the teacher when they need a break, are feeling frustrated or overwhelmed, or if they are unsure of what is expected of them. These are essential life skills so this is a great moment to encourage them!

6

Call on friends, peers, and classmates to help your child transition.

Friends, peers, and classmates help to create a sense of normalcy for the return to school. Encourage your child to reconnect (virtually or at a distance) with a few others from their school before school begins. If your child struggles with social interactions and/or peers check out Tips for encouraging and supporting friendships during the school year.



Read more!

Check out **CMHO’s Back to School Mental Health Kit** for more information and resources. [CMHO.org/Back-to-School](https://www.cmho.org/Back-to-School)

Find Help

Children’s Mental Health Ontario has 4,000 child and youth mental healthcare workers across Ontario ready to help parents and their children. Depending on your needs, we can connect you to child mental health professionals that will most help you and your family, including psychiatrists, therapists, and psychologists.

