



How to Create:

'A Smooth Start to September'!



Your thoughts may not be at all on your child returning to school in September, but as the holidays come to an end, the thought of going back to school can make some children feel anxious and nervous. Here are some things you can do to make going back to school easier and less stressful for you and your child.

Chat about school in your everyday conversations, especially as the holidays come to an end. Keep chat light, short, positive, upbeat. Talk of things to look forward to; seeing friends again, teachers and teaching assistants they like and future school trips or activities. If your child sees that you are ok with their anxiety, they will feel more confident.

Plan ahead. Prepare as much as possible a couple of weeks before – involve your child in getting uniform and equipment ready in advance. Have a practice run of the journey to school especially if they are entering via a different gate or starting secondary education.

Create a visual timetable or checklist. Children function best with a predictable routine. Create a checklist with your child of tasks for the morning routine - get dressed, have breakfast, brush teeth, get bag ready, put shoes on, out the door. Use pictures of actions as well as words.

Manage anxious talk. Children may want to talk about their worries around school. Create a 'Talking Time' for your child each day. Choose a time when they are not hungry or tired, perhaps after tea. Keep the time short - 15 minutes at most. Use paper/pens if your child likes writing or drawing. Tell them this is a time to chat about anything but also to talk about worries around school. Limiting worry talk to a set, regular time can help contain anxiety.

Distract, Distract, Distract! Whichever way you travel to school, help distract your child's worry thoughts. Play I-spy, use songs or rhymes, use your senses (tell me 5 things you see, hear, smell, touch), use exercise (do 5 hops, jumps, skips).

Use transition objects. When you drop your child off at school the first day back, give them something to help them know you are thinking of them - something they can keep safely in their bag just to know it is there. A picture of you, a piece of soft material that you have both cuddled or a little note to say you love them. If your child has packed lunch you could put a different note in their box each day saying something lovely about them.

Create a quick and positive good-bye ritual. Although we may feel uncomfortable leaving an anxious or upset child, prolonged goodbyes at the school gate will only serve to increase anxiety. Keeping farewells short and sweet will help. Use a transition object (as above), give 3 kisses, do a high-five etc, say 'see you later alligator'. Remind your child that you will see them very soon and if you have something to look forward to after school, remind them of that. If farewells are difficult, talk to the staff member on the gate – they will be able to help.

We have 3 short videos about anxiety on our school webpage if you would like more information.

Check out the 'Wellbeing' tab on the school home page! <https://www.wrpschool.org/wellbeing>



Support Services, promoted by CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service):

Childline www.childline.org.uk

Free phone line **0800 1111** and text service for young people to contact a counsellor. Website contains a variety of helpful videos, games and articles.

YoungMinds www.youngminds.org.uk

A mental health charity that provides support, advice and resources for young people in supporting their mental health.

Kooth www.kooth.com

This site provides free mental health support with their online counsellors. It is a free sign up service and includes resources, discussion boards and helpful tips and articles. This is aimed at 11+ age group

NHS Every mind Matters www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

This website offers a range of mental health advice with an interactive quiz that's designed to help you feel more in control of your emotional mental wellbeing.

Child Bereavement UK www.childbereavementuk.org

A website for young people who are grieving as well as information on how to support a young person. A helpline is also available 0800 028840

Papyrus www.papyrus-uk.org

A mental health charity dedicated to preventing young suicide. Call 08000684141/ Text 07860039967 for any young person who is experiencing thoughts of suicide or for anyone who has concerns for a young person who may be in distress.