

## Preparing Your Child to Return to School

Returning to school this year is going to be a big transition for your child. Your child will be returning to familiar faces and the structure of school, but they will be adjusting to an environment and routines that are very different from when they left. It is important for you to prepare your child for these changes and discuss any feelings they may have about returning to school. Please review these helpful guidelines to support your child's mental and social-emotional wellbeing.

- **Get into a routine now.** Your child may need to adjust their morning and evening routines, and sleep schedule. In the days ahead of school, begin implementing what your school routine will be so that your child has time to adjust. Elementary-aged students typically need 10 hours of sleep each night.
- **Talk to your child about how school will be different** (for example: desks far apart from each other, everyone maintaining physical distance, eating in their classroom for lunch, required masks, they will not see all of their classmates due to schedules, etc.). Explain that these steps are to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- **Anticipate behavior changes in your child.** Watch for changes like excessive crying or irritation, excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, or difficulty concentrating, which may be signs your child is struggling with stress and anxiety.
- **It is normal for us to see some separation anxiety** the first few days of school, especially with kindergarteners. Given the current circumstances, children of any age may develop similar anxieties this year. Here are some tips for school/separation anxiety:
  - Develop a quick goodbye/drop-off routine and prepare your child for what it will be.
  - Be consistent, stick to routines, and make sure your child is well-prepared for the school day (clothes picked out, school materials ready, etc.)
  - Be calm and reassuring. Kids pick up on our emotions very easily.
  - Talk with your child's teacher.
  - Teach problem-solving skills.
  - Expect setbacks – some regression is normal, but you know your child best – reach out for help if you need it.
- **You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:**
  - Take breaks
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Exercise
  - Eat well
  - Stay socially connected
- **Talk to your child about how school is going and about interactions with classmates and teachers.** Find out how your child is feeling and communicate that what they may be feeling is normal.
- **We have support staff and resources to support your child and family's mental and social-emotional wellbeing.** If you or your child is struggling, please reach out to your child's teacher, the school counselor (Mrs. Hogan), or fill out a student support request form [here](#).