

Tips for Helping Your Child Transition to a New School

As students move to a new school and a new environment, it's common to have feelings of worry or stress. Things that have made them feel safe and secure- like familiar faces and buildings may no longer be a part of their life. With patience and support, parents can help their children adapt. Below, you will find some helpful tips to make this transition smoother.

Prepare Your Child for the Expectations of their New School

- If possible, **visit the school** with your child so they feel more comfortable with the layout of the school. This will decrease their anxiety for their first day and ease them into feeling more comfortable in their new school. If in-person visits are unavailable, find out if there's a virtual option to tour the school.
- **Role play** with your child. They can be the teacher and you can be the student, then switch. This will help them play out the concept of the new school and understand respective roles.
- **Help your child understand the expectations of after-school activities, like clubs or sports.** There are lots of after-school activities which are a great time for students to explore their passions and interests, while also teaching time management skills. However, be sure to leave some down time for your student because it's important for them to relax as well. If your child feels overwhelmed by new school responsibilities, try to reduce their responsibilities at home temporarily.
- **Re-enforce organizational skills with your child.** These skills will not only help your child in their daily school life, but also in their future.
- **Establish and continue routines.** Kids thrive on healthy routines. Think about how this can be done for meals, bathtime, brushing teeth, homework, etc. Consider keeping a visual schedule of when your child can expect certain things to happen.
- **Develop confidence.** Think about what your child does have control over. Can they pick out their backpack, lunch or clothes? Allow them to make their own decisions when possible.

TIP: Make sure that sleep is prioritized! Establish a sleep schedule before school starts. Kids should get 8-10 hours of sleep each night!

Be Your Child's Support System

Change is difficult. Transitioning schools is a learning curve for many students due to changes in academic expectations, making new friends, and learning a new school's environment. It is important that you talk with your child and let them know you are there for them if needed.

- **Attend parent teacher conferences** so you are informed about your child's school academic procedures and expectations. This also lets your child know you support and care about their academic efforts.
- **Help them learn to embrace uncertainty.** While it is difficult when there are changes, emotions don't determine actions.
- **Set small goals together** to help your child push through the discomfort and ease into the transition of going to a new school. One way is setting a goal to sit by a new student at lunch or

say hi to a new person. This will help your child feel proud and they may even make a new friend in the process.

- **Focus on the positives and celebrate successes.**
- **Listen, make eye contact, and avoid multitasking.** Remember to talk with your child, not at him or her and be sure to ask open ended questions like, “What was the best thing that happened today?”.
- **Don’t forget the praises.** You can never tell your child “I love you” or “I’m proud of you” too much!
- **Communicate with the school.** Relaying your child’s interests and what they are struggling with can help relay important information and can lead to more meaningful connections between staff and students.

Check in with Your Child

- **Make an effort to talk with your child every day**, so they know what goes on at school is important to you as well.
- **Provide opportunities for your child to connect** with old friends and develop new friendships. See if you can arrange a time for your child to connect with others. Even a few hours with others can help your child feel more comfortable.
- **Validate your child’s feelings** while also encouraging them to do things even if they feel nervous.
- **Be patient.** During this transition your child may be quieter than normal, have lots of questions, or be agitated more easily. Allow them time to adjust to their new normal.
- **Discuss common fears**, such as:
 - Getting to class on time
 - Riding the bus
 - Making friends
 - Being different than other kids
 - Tough classes
- **If you are worried about your child’s mental health, there are resources...**
 - Start the conversation by speaking to the school counselor about concerns or therapy needs. They will help connect you and your child to the right resources and school-based therapy if that is the right option.
 - You can also visit the MindPeace website at www.MindPeaceCincinnati.com and search the online database of mental health providers in your area that accept your insurance. Feel free to call MindPeace, too, at **(513) 803-0844** for help finding care.
 - For non-life threatening urgent mental health needs, consider visiting the Best Point Urgent Care. Open Monday-Friday from 3pm-10pm at 5051 Duck Creek Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45227, or call **(513) 527-3040**.
 - For a non-life threatening mental health crisis, you are encouraged to contact the Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center **(513) 636-4124**. The PIRC staff will help you to decide the most effective level of intervention for your child’s mental health crisis.
 - Share the **988** Suicide & Crisis Lifeline with your child. This provides 24/7, free and confidential phone or text support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

TIP: At dinner ask about the day’s “highs” and “lows” or play two truths and a lie about the day. This helps get kids talking!



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