

How can we help our kiddos with the transition back to full time school after the “Unknown” Covid routine:

Transitioning back to school is an event filled with many emotions for children and parents. Your child may be excited about the changes, including all its challenges, or apprehensive, or any emotion in between.

In addition, the degree to which your child experiences an emotion can be vast. You may find the following suggestions to be helpful in helping your child in whatever comes next. This information was written by Robyn Stead, an educational psychologist and teacher:

The impact of Covid-19 has meant that teachers, parents and students have experienced a large number of significant changes in a short period of time. The next big change will be the return to full time school and daily face to face interactions with other students and teachers. The thought of this may be a little unsettling for some students and their parents. I have some ideas that may help you to make the return to school a little easier.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN/STUDENT

The best way to reassure someone who is feeling worried about the transition back to school is to first listen to their concerns and acknowledge that their feelings are valid. Provide reassurance that whatever they are feeling is OK. As adults, we often want to rush in and fix problems or help to logically explain away the concerns. Focus on the feelings and emotions rather than on practicalities at this stage. Some fear or concern about change is normal and it is this degree of concern that helps us to make plans to ensure our safety.

A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

Once your child/student has had the opportunity to tell you about their feelings they can be encouraged to focus on what they can do to manage their concerns. Particularly with older children, a problem-solving approach can be helpful. Encourage them to generate a range of possible solutions to the problems they raise and then select the ones that they think will work best for them.

LOOK TO THE POSITIVES

Encourage your child/student to talk about the things they enjoy and value about going to school. This will be unique to every child but it is likely that they are looking forward to seeing their friends, teachers, playing games, cultural events and participating in learning that can only take place at school.

SHARE THE INFO!

Provide as much information about returning to school as possible. School will be different than it was before we left in March. Sharing examples of timetables, physical arrangements and some fun activities that are coming up during the year will be helpful. Information about the precautions being taken by school staff to ensure the safety of students and staff is reassuring. Children could make a list of their own personal precautions to be shared with teachers and peers. Parents could talk about their experiences of managing changes in their work. Make sure you emphasize the strategies you are using that are successful.

BE PREPARED

Start adjusting waking and bedtimes closer to those of a regular school day. Ensure school clothes are washed and ready to wear on the first day of school. Remind children of the school day routines that they will be returning to shortly. You could spend some time reflecting on the new routines that they have enjoyed recently. Consider whether some of these could be carried over into the going to school routine.

Using some or all of the strategies I've mentioned will help you and your child/students to manage the transition back to full time school well. If you feel that you need further help you can talk to your child's teacher or the school counselor at cara.wall@psd285.org.

Thank you for all you do for these kiddos,

Cara Wallen

School Counselor