

# PARENT BACKPACK FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL

## Tips for Parents

### Start preparing early:

- Two weeks before school begins, start to change and establish new routines, such as bedtime
- [Sleep Hygiene for Children](#)

### Try to get the family back to old routines:

- Establish the importance of routines
- Mealtimes generally at the same time/place every evening
- Reduce screen time, especially at night
- Refreshers on reading, math, and other skills they had but may have forgotten
- [Helping Kids Back into the School Routine](#)

### Start preparing your child for the new school year:

- Show them that you are looking forward to a new school year
- Begin modeling and practicing self-regulation skills
- If possible, involve them in school supply shopping
- Discuss positive things about returning to the school building
- Encourage them to share their thoughts about returning to school
- Speak about ways to stay safe throughout the school day
- Brain-storm about how to handle anxiety about being back in school: [How to get your Child to Talk About School](#)

### After the first day back:

- Ask open ended questions about their day

## Model Self-Regulation In Your Family

### SELF-REGULATION

is the act of managing thoughts, coping with big emotions, adapting and responding to one's environment appropriately

### SELF-REGULATION

is taught through interaction with child and caretaker, as the caretaker promotes and models healthy behaviors and coping skills. This is called co-regulation.

### SELF-REGULATION

helps you and your child cope with challenging feelings, stressors and decisions to be made together.

### SELF-REGULATION

promotes wellbeing across the lifespan and is important, as it allows children to do well in school, with peers and at home.

### Stay healthy. Stay calm.

8 tips for managing your child's anxiety about COVID-19.



Create a routine.



Listen to your child and check in frequently.



Look for signs of anxiety.



Teach coping skills.



Focus on controllable tasks like washing hands.



Encourage positive thinking.



Stay connected.



Seek professional help if needed.

Get more tips and resources at <https://nyprojecthope.org/>



## Have a plan B (or C) for kids who may have difficulty within the school day:

- Establish a school staff person (teacher, principal, guidance counselor) that they feel comfortable with or can go to if they are feeling upset in school
- Remind them of ways to calm themselves if they feel upset or nervous: [50 Calm-Down Ideas to Try with Kids of All Ages](#).
- Enlist friends to create support and look out for each other during the school day and remind them that their friends are there too (if applicable)
- Think about planning something fun for the weekends (a family board game night, getting ice cream, watching a favorite movie, fun outside activity, visit to a family or friends house, long walk with a family member)
- Explore other options of support, such as an ADAPP Counselor, private therapist, support group, etc.

## Resources:

- [ADAPP Website](#)
- CDC: [Making Decisions about Children Attending In-person School During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)
- [NY Project Hope: Dealing with COVID](#)

Change What You Can,  
Accept What You Cannot!

## Model Positive Communication in Your Family

### Signs to look for in children that may be struggling:

- Increased defiance or irritability
- Disturbances in sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Lack of concentration
- Less energy, fatigue
- Physical symptoms like nausea, muscle tension or dizziness
- Refusal to go to school
- Sadness or crying spells
- Isolating behaviors

### How to start the conversation:

- Create a safe space to talk
- Listen to your child's concerns
- Validate their emotions
- Remind them it is okay to have these feelings
- Model positive and open communication
- Remind them they can always talk to a trusted adult
- Stay connected, check-in often