



Back to School with Joy and Optimism

Getting back in the school year routines after summer vacation can be stressful for parents and kids. With some playfulness and stress-relieving strategies, you can approach this school year with joy and optimism.

Talk to kids about their feelings

- If kids are anxious, share feelings of uncertainty you're having and let them know these feelings are normal.
- Rather than assuming you know how your children feel, ask them.
- Children often have physical symptoms like stomach aches or headaches when they are keeping strong emotions inside. Teach them about this mind-body connection and how to use it to explore their feelings.

Use mindfulness and movement to manage stress.

- When kids are feeling anxious, try [breath work](#) to bring calm in the moment.
- When kids are having trouble focusing, try some fun, invigorating [yoga](#).
- When kids need a total mind/body reset, try dancing or shaking it off.
- Practicing breath work, yoga, and meditation daily helps kids and parents feel less anxious and depressed in general.

Create playful routines and healthy habits.

- Bring laughter and playfulness into family routines, especially ones where children are resistant.
- Try different ways of inspiring your children to follow your family routines: 1) make it a game, 2) use song and dance, 3) get silly, 4) create a character to adopt that gets a laugh out of your kids.
- For younger children and those with ADHD or on the autism spectrum, creating a [visual schedule](#) with pictures can help kids stick to their routines.
- When all else fails, laugh about it! Kids mirror our emotions, so get joyful!
- Teach your kids [healthy habits](#) to instill character values by weaving them into daily routines.

Build positive relationships with school staff.

- Start building a relationship with your child's teacher and administrators as early as possible, even before school when appropriate.
- Especially at the beginning of your relationship, try to approach each interaction with a positive attitude.
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher consistently.
- Remember that you and your child's teacher are a team. You both want the best for your child and their education.

