

10 Ways To Help Kids Handle Back-to-School Anxiety

Here are 10 ways parents can help their child start the new school year on a positive, less stressful note.

- 1. Chat with your child.** Encourage your child to talk about his feelings. Change is stressful, and venting feelings may be exactly what he needs. Let him know that being scared or worried is completely normal. Also, be patient. It can take a few weeks to a month for kids to really begin to feel comfortable in their new environment.
- 2. Create a sense of community.** Parents can help by providing chances for their child to make new friends: Sign her up for summer or after-school activities with classmates, schedule play dates before the school year starts, or reach out to other parents and have a class meet-up a few days before school. Feeling a part of things is important for children at every age and inclusion will help lower their anxiety levels. Having just one friendly face in the crowd can make all the difference when children are adjusting to new situations.
- 3. New school?** Keep in touch with old friends, too. If your child is starting at a new school, especially in middle school or high school, you can help by encouraging kids to keep in touch.
- 4. Get the kids involved.** Provide opportunities for your children to meet other kids who have similar interests: Go to a class at the public library, sign him up for town tennis (or an art class), look into Girl or Boy Scout troops, etc.
- 5. Get involved, too.** It is always important to get to know your child's teacher and even other parents in the class. Volunteering to be a room parent is a great way to meet your child's new friends, as well. Another way to keep active and involved is to be a volunteer coach or activity leader.
- 6. Visit the school.** Checking out the school before the first day is a great way to ease back-to-school anxiety. You can learn where your child's classroom is, learn more about the daily schedule, and just allow your child to see what it feels like to walk the halls and visit the library.
- 7. Get into a groove.** Establishing a back-to-school routine is important. If you can get your act together and begin this routine a few weeks prior to back-to-school—even better! It's great to at least talk about what needs to be done each night before bed and what the routine will be like each morning before school. If everyone is on the same page, it will most likely make back-to-school mornings a lot smoother.



8. **Get organized.** Take the time to create order. Some great ideas are having a space for backpacks and lunches, a file where permission slips and notes home go each day after school and a family white board for reminders and notes. Also, if possible, make sure you have the supplies you'll need and a quiet space for kids to do their homework and school projects. Our recently article called ["Homework Tips for Parents"](#) provides some tips on easing stress during homework time.
9. **Don't talk it up.** Sometimes a "it's no big deal" attitude is best—back to school can be exciting, but the excitement can be what leads to increased anxiety. Parents know their child. If he is stressed out by anticipation, then don't make a big back-to-school shopping trip and discuss how going back to school is for weeks leading up to the day. On the other hand, if the excitement will help overshadow the fear for your child, then throw some confetti around and celebrate. Either way, make sure your child is well-rested and has a healthy breakfast before the first day. Those two things will go a long way in helping him feel his best!
10. **Get regular progress reports.** Once you've made it past the first day or the first few weeks, you'll want to check in and see how things are going. Take time to connect with your child's teacher throughout the year. You may get reports from your child that all is well, but it pays to ask the teacher for insights about your child's academic and social progress.

More than anything, let your child know that you believe in him and that you know he can have a successful first day. And reassure him that you'll discuss his first day that evening, when you're both happily back home.