

Mindful Moments

Brought to you by the Itinerant Counselling Team

To help a child ease into the school year and manage back-to-school anxiety, establish a routine, visit the school, talk about worries, and practice relaxation techniques – this is valuable for all ages.

Prepare for the Transition

Establish a Routine: A week or two before school starts, resume school-year routines, such as setting a realistic bedtime, reducing screen time, and creating home routines that match school days (e.g., wake times, meal times).

Visit the School: Go to the school several times before school starts (as able), and do as much walking the halls as you can, to locate their classroom, the washroom, and the playground.

Practice Drop-off: Make a plan for the drop-off. Rehearse the drop off and spend time on the playground or inside the classroom if the building is open.

Introduce the Teacher: If possible, introduce your child to their teacher.

Rehearse Common Interactions: Discuss and even rehearse common interactions that your child will have with other kids and teachers. Give them words they can use to interact with others.

Address Worries and Fears

Encourage Open Communication: Create a safe space for your child to share their worries and fears.

Validate Their Feelings: Acknowledge that starting school or returning to school can be stressful.

Problem-Solve Together: Instead of offering reassurance, encourage your child to think of ways to solve their problems.

Focus on the Positive: Remind them of new situations they've dealt with and how they ended up fine. Adults can also share their own experiences and how they positively coped.

Reassure them of your support: Avoid rescuing. Instead, let them know that you are always there for them, and will help with their stress and anxiety.

Prepare Relaxation Techniques

Deep Breathing: Teach your child simple relaxation techniques like deep breathing exercises, meditation, or gentle yoga stretches.

Mindfulness: Ask your child to name 3 things they can see, identify 3 sounds they can hear, and move 3 different parts of their bodies. Model curiosity and paying attention to glimmers each day.

Engage in Calming Activities: Draw or paint, read a favorite book, play a favorite board game, or spend time outside.

Explore a number of strategies so your child can determine what works best for them.

Additional Resources: [Back-to-school Wellness](#), [Young Minds - School Refusal](#), and [Possibilities for Change - Help Youth Manage Anxiety](#).