# 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
- <u>Sleep Hygiene for Children</u>

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

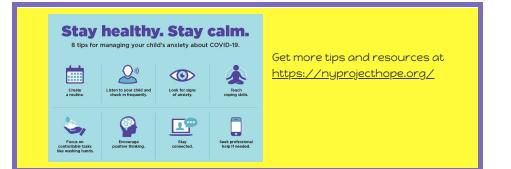
- Establish the importance of routines
- Mealtimes generally at the same time/place every evening
- Reduce screen time, especially at night
- Refreshers on reading, math, and other skills they had but may have forgotten
- Helping Kids Back into the School Routine

### 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: <u>How to get your Child to Talk About School</u>

#### 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 <u>co-regulation</u>.

#### 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.



## 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: <u>50 Calm-Down Ideas to Try with Kids of All Ages</u>.
- 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: <u>Making Decisions about Children Attending In-person School</u> <u>During the COVID-19 Pandemic</u>: Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers
- <u>NY Project Hope: Dealing with COVID</u>

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



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