

# Anxiety and Getting Ready to Go to School

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Anxious feelings are normal and expected in children and teens returning to school, changing schools, or for first timers starting kindergarten but even more so during these unprecedented times. Your anxious child may cling, cry, have temper tantrums, complain of headaches or stomach pains, isolate, bargain to stay home, or become irritable and angry.

## Here is what you can do to help...

**Take care of the basics:** Nobody copes well when they are tired or hungry. Provide healthy snacks and a structured routine in preparation for school.

**Provide empathy:** Find times to discuss fears—in the car, during mealtime, or at bedtime. Tell your child that **it is normal** to have concerns and give them the opportunity to share those concerns.



**Problem-solve:** Children often seek reassurance that bad things won't happen to reduce their worry. Instead, encourage your child to think of ways to solve their problem, i.e. what to do if someone makes comments they don't like or that are inappropriate.

**Focus on the positive aspects:** Encourage your child to re-direct attention away from the worries towards the positives. Most kids can think of *something* good... family connections or going home at the end of the day.

**Pay attention to your own behavior:** It can be anxiety-provoking for parents to begin this school

year. Children take cues from their parents, so the more confidence and comfort you can model, the more your child will understand there is no reason to be afraid.

For more helpful suggestions for every age group from young children through young adults, visit: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/tips-to-ease-back-to-school-anxiety-620832> .

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responds to mental health needs by providing spiritual support, awareness, education, and resources.



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