

Back to School Is Your Child “Totally” Ready?

Preparing children for a new school year typically involves buying new clothes, replacing last year’s backpack, and stocking up on new school equipment. Often overlooked is a check-up on our children’s feelings and outlook about returning to school.

Many children experience some anxiety at starting a new school year. Let your children know that this is normal and everyone experiences it. Encourage them to talk about their particular concerns and express their emotions. Although they are young, their fears and worries are as real and powerful as adults’. But, unlike adults, they have less experience dealing with the feelings. Their fears can be harmful if not addressed by the adults in their life.

The good news is there are many things you can do to help relieve your children’s anxieties and promote positive feelings about going back to school. Studies show that your involvement can contribute more to your child’s success than your income or education. So it pays for you to take time to listen to your children and support them as they begin a new school year!

Helpful Tips

- Take time to talk to your children about going back to school. Encourage them to express their emotions and feelings and share some of your own.
- Let your child know that you think school is important.
- Continue your talks as the school year unfolds. With the door to discussion wide open, your child will feel comfortable coming to you for guidance as tough issues arise in their life.
- Show interest in school activities and attend events that your child participates in.
- Attend parent meetings and be respectful of your child’s teachers and other school personnel. Your model of how to behave with these people will help your child set his/her own behavior standards at school.
- Provide unconditional love and support to your child.
- Celebrate your child’s accomplishments. Encourage their talents. Accept their limitations.
- Set a regular time for your child’s waking-up, homework, chores, dinner and bedtime. Studies show that successful students have parents who keep a daily routine going in the household.
- To simplify mornings, help your child select what to wear to school on the night before.
- To help your child stay attentive in school, make sure they have a healthy breakfast everyday. A good breakfast will usually keep them away from the less nutritious food in school vending machines.

For More Information

For a free and confidential mental health screening, go on-line to www.mhacolorado.org.