



Back to School Tips for Supporting Well-Being

PROMOTING SAFE AND HEALTHY TRANSITIONS

The return to school for a new year can be a challenge for many students in a typical time. After periods of remote learning and amidst an ongoing pandemic, many students (and staff) face additional challenges in making a successful transition back to their learning communities. The following tips are not just for classroom teachers, but for all team members to help foster a successful return to the routines and connections that help students thrive.



- Tip**
Focus on building a sense of community in your classroom – [get to know your students](#) and help them to learn about one another. Learn and use each other’s names. Make connections with your students’ families.
- Tip**
Teach and reteach [expectations and routines](#). Consider refraining from introducing new academic content until routines are firmly re-established.
- Tip**
Consider changes to physical spaces that promote regulation. Low distraction, varied seating/workspaces, access to peers, sensory regulation tools, tech, etc.
- Tip**
Establish back-to-school social events to allow peers and staff to re-connect. These may need to occur virtually, including virtual school tours and classroom visits. Back-to-school transitions will likely require more time than usual.
- Tip**
Work with families to identify those who may need assistance with food, clothing and other basic needs.
- Tip**
Consider offering family education on specific strategies they can use [at home to support successful reentry](#). This should also include information on how to seek support if they have specific concerns about their child.
- Tip**
Anticipate student resistance as a method of establishing control over their environments. Many students may have felt a lack of predictability and stability over the past months. Adults working with these students should [develop ways to empower students](#) and provide unconditional positive support to build trust. Take extra time for relationship building.
- Tip**
Acknowledge students have had inconsistent behavior and academic expectations for the previous several months. Expectations and appropriate behavior should be explicitly and regularly retaught.
- Tip**
View behaviours through a [trauma-informed lens](#) and as a potential symptom of deficits in regulatory skills and a prolonged adjustment period. Expect [anxiety](#) as a normal response to stress.
- Tip**
Anticipate significant [fatigue and sleepiness](#), particularly among adolescents. Implement a more gradual re-introduction of academic expectations compared with previous years, with a shift in focus and expectations on [social and emotional well-being, self-efficacy, and adaptive skills](#).
- Tip**
[Self-care](#) for adults and youth should become part of the school culture rather than be the entire responsibility of each individual staff member. Adults who are well can best care for children.

