

Reading, Writing, and Resilience

Navigating the Transition Back to the Classroom

For Kids (Ages 2-6)



Going to school, preschool, or daycare can be lots of fun! When it's time to go back to school or daycare for the first time after being home with your family for such a long time, it may be difficult to leave your parent/caregiver and some of the things that made you feel safe. Talking with your mom, dad, or teacher about your feelings will help keep you stay calm, safe, and ready to learn and play at school or daycare.

Stress

Common Reactions to Stress

Going to new places and seeing new people can be fun but sometimes can make me feel bad. I might miss my family or feel scared or sad about going somewhere new. It can also feel scary to meet new teachers and friends. Trying new things can sometimes make my head or tummy ache or make me cry or hide from everyone. Some kids have strong feelings or many different feelings all at the same time when they are stressed.

How to Deal with Stress

When grown-ups notice I am upset or showing "big" feelings, it helps me most when they stay close, stay calm, and help me return to calm together with them. When grown-ups around me are calm and pay attention to me, it helps me to feel safe and sure that things will be okay. A grown-up can help me know what will happen next or find some fun things to do to help me feel calm again.

Self-Care

Many kids feel better when they ask a grown-up to help them do one of these things:

- Ask to give or get a hug.
- Play gently with a pet.
- Look at a favorite picture book or ask a grown-up to read a story.
- Hug a favorite stuffed animal and keep it with you.
- Tell the grown-ups who are caring for you about your mom, dad, family, or pets.
- Sing a favorite song.



- Play safely with classmates.
- Draw or paint a picture with fingerpaints.
- Build a tower with blocks and knock it down.
- Pretend to be an animal. Which animal would you like to be right now?
- Practice “belly breathing” with a favorite stuffed animal (videos may be found online).
- Do a job that you enjoy so you can be a helper.

Grown-ups benefit from “self-care” too when they are having a stressful time. When grown-ups feel nervous, sad, angry, or worried, they may need support, a short break, or something fun to feel better themselves. It helps kids when the grown-ups who care for them take care of their own needs by talking or meeting with other adults, eating healthy foods and getting exercise, or taking short breaks so they can stay calm and encouraging.



Concrete Strategies

Establish a Routine

A grown-up can help me make a plan for the day so I will know when healthy and fun activities will happen.

Facts about Covid

A grown-up can read me stories about the coronavirus and talk with me about how to stay safe and healthy.

There is information online, to help my parents and teachers, too:

- For Parents: [COVID-19 Parental Resources Kit](#)
- For Child Care Providers: [COVID-19 Resources for Child Care Providers](#)
- Transitions: [Head Start - Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center](#)
- Guidance and Resources for PA Schools PreK to 12: [COVID-19 Resources for Schools](#)

Encourage Social Connections

I can share smiles and tell special people I love them. I can play safely with my brothers and sisters. A grown-up can help me visit safely with friends, grandparents, family, and neighbors or they can help me stay connected by telephone calls, video chats, or writing letters.



Discuss Fears and Concerns

I can tell a grown-up how I feel and when I need help. A grown-up can help me find safe and healthy ways to show my feelings and solve problems. Some things that may help me feel better:

- Sharing my feelings with a grown-up I trust, learning names for my feelings, learning that others may feel the same way, and practicing ways to cope with “big” feelings.
- Drawing pictures of myself wearing a mask and playing with my friends, can help me share my feelings and talk with grown-ups about how I feel.
- Watching videos with my mom, dad, or teacher about favorite characters going to school, wearing masks, and playing with friends helps me know what to expect.
- When I read books or social stories about feelings, going to school for the first time, and about changes due to the coronavirus, with a grown-up I trust, it helps me to know what is going on around me, share my feelings and questions, and know what I can do to stay safe and healthy while I play and learn.

How to Get Help

I can tell a grown-up how I feel and ask for help when I need to feel better. The grown-ups who care for me may want to talk about my feelings with my doctor or a counselor. There are lots of places kids and families can get extra help to feel calm and safe.

