

Navigating Back-to-School Challenges

Presented by your
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



Seminar goals

- Discuss back-to-school stressors
- Get tips that can help you and your child navigate with resilience
- Explore ways to proactively address learning and social concerns
- Review keys to year-round success
- Know the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Back to School!

Positive feelings, but also some challenges

- Scheduling changes and hurdles
- Separation anxiety
- Loss of control/oversight
- Worry about educational success
- Worry about social success
- A first “first day” (new school/level)



Being proactive can help you get ahead of the stress in the areas that feel challenging.



Address back-to-school worries

Be sensitive and supportive

- Normalize the nervousness
- Gently draw out worries
- Validate feelings, strategize together
- Acknowledge concerns, but express confidence
- Recognize impact on mood and behavior

Common fears for a child

Being new/fitting in

Making friends

Getting picked on or bullied

Doing something embarrassing

Finding their way/getting lost

Keeping up with the workload

Understanding the material/tests

Performance and grade expectations

Past struggles (social or academic)

Help them manage emotional stress

Share strategies and tools

- Turn unknowns into knowns
- Teach simple de-stressing techniques
- Try a “change the channel” time out
- Watch for cues that stress is unmanageable

Navigating transition stressors, with your support, can help build resilience for future challenges.



(UNICEF, n.d..)

Distress signals

Pre-schoolers

Thumb-sucking, bedwetting, sleep disturbances, clinginess, loss of appetite, fear of the dark, regression in behavior, withdrawal

Elementary-age

Irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, refusing to go to school, nightmares, poor concentration, withdrawal from activities or friends

Teens

Sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, increased risk-taking, poor concentration

Address practical stressors

End of summer to-dos

- Shift into school mode gradually
- Get physicals early
- Work out transportation details
- Don't put off school shopping
- Set up a staging area
- Create a scheduling system



Be on the alert for communications from the school; they often have important directions and dates that you'll need before school starts.



Be proactive about potential concerns



LEARNING

- Connect with teachers and resources
- Discuss high but realistic expectations
- Promote and celebrate learning



SOCIAL

- Help them build confidence
- Support friendship building
- Discuss peer pressure/bullying

Parents of neurodiverse students may need to take extra steps to address concerns.

Year-round keys to success

- Review safety and home alone rules
- Make healthy choices a priority
- Have workable schedules and routines
- Be engaged and involved



Make sure to recognize and respect the line between involvement and over-involvement.





**Free every Monday
through Friday:
Knowledge.**

**Bring your own
containers.**

- Sign on high school bulletin board
Charles E. McKenzie

Benefits of the EAP

- Face-to-face sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Home/life support such as elder care, child care and pet care
- Convenience services
- Financial services
- Legal services

Benefits vary by employer. Please check with your HR for your specific EAP benefits.

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Thank you!



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