

Back-to-school anxiety

Help your child navigate the unknowns

Starting a new school year is full of unknowns in a “normal” year. Now, worries about new variants of COVID-19 are adding a host of new unknowns to the list.

While you won’t have all the answers, it’s important to recognize that your child is likely to experience heightened back-to-school stress and anxiety. And if navigating unknown situations has been anxiety-inducing for your child or teen in the past, you’ll want to be especially aware this year so you can provide the help they need.

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Preparing for a socially distanced return to school

As school doors re-open in your community, the experience will likely involve safety guidelines for students, teachers, and parents due to COVID-19. It’s only natural for everyone involved to feel nervous and apprehensive. To help kids of all ages adjust:

- Talk about how the situation is evolving and what to expect. Discuss the rules in place to keep them, their friends, and teachers safe and healthy.
- Think about different scenarios that could happen and how to respond.
- Practice wearing a mask. Acknowledge that mask-wearing can be difficult while still emphasizing the importance.

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In-person or remote learning: How to make the choice for your child

This school year, parents may have a choice between in-person and remote learning for their child. How does a parent weigh the benefits to a child of being with other children and learning from a teacher in person against the risks from a disease that scientists are still working to understand? Like any major decision, breaking the choices down into parts can help. Read on for a five-step process for considering a decision involving risk.

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Monitoring the pandemic’s impact on your child’s mental health—and when to seek help

As the pandemic stretches on, questions and concerns are increasing about the potential long-term impacts distancing restrictions, school closures, and overall isolation will have on children and adolescents. After all, children and teens are experiencing the pandemic during crucial developmental periods for social and coping skills. While experiencing stress, anxiety, and frustration is normal for kids navigating an unknown and ever-changing situation like the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents and caregivers find themselves wondering how to gauge their child’s mental health and when to seek help.

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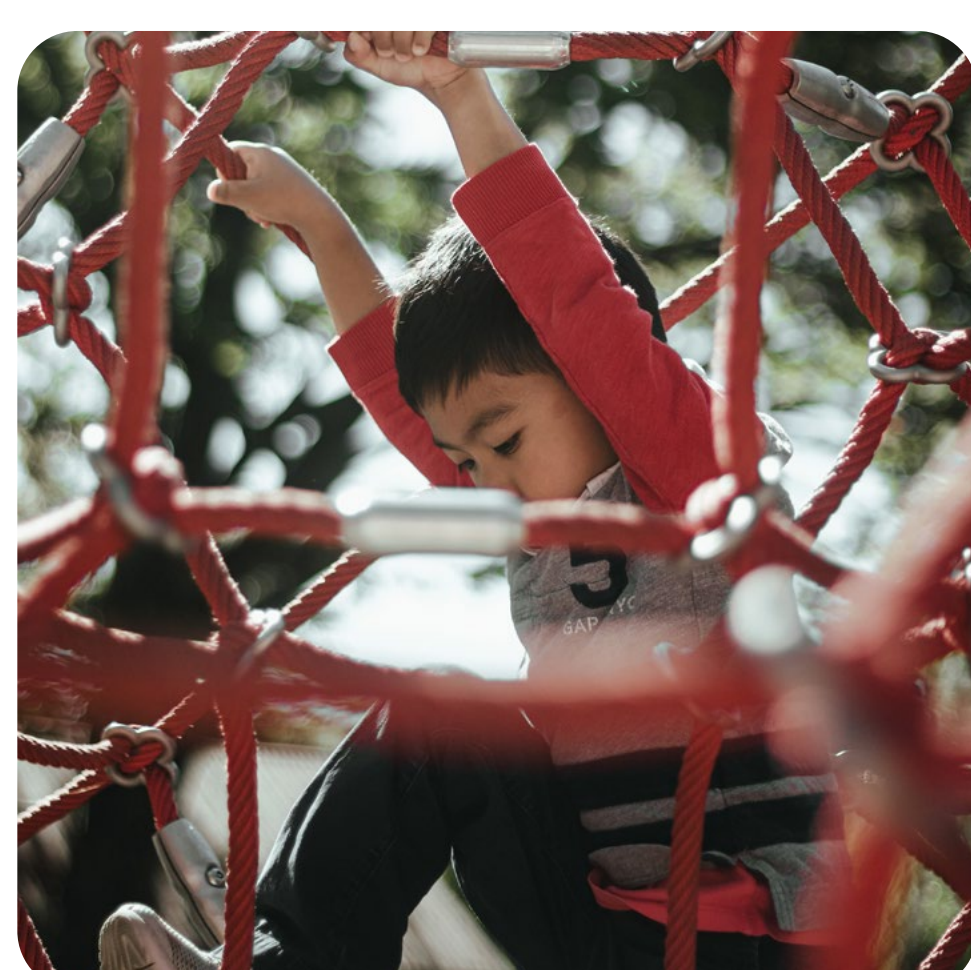
How was your day? How to get your kids to talk to you

As a parent, you know that getting kids to open up isn’t always easy. Kids are amazingly good at responding to open-ended questions with a single word, giving their parents no clue about how their day might have gone, what’s going on in their lives, or any problems or concerns they may be having. But don’t throw your hands up just yet. You can communicate effectively with your children—no matter their age—by learning some simple strategies that will incline them to open up to you.

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Extend your child’s learning beyond the classroom

Teachers work hard to give children a good education during the school day. Give your child’s classroom curriculum a boost by reinforcing the lessons with fun, family-friendly activities. Jumpstart your brainstorming with these creative ideas.

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School days: How to prepare introverted and extroverted kids for heading back to class

The pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic are complex: working from home, caring for elderly parents, and helping kids navigate the challenges of virtual or socially distanced school. Explore how your child’s introverted or extroverted personality impacts the adjustment whether they’re returning to in-person or virtual classrooms.

[How to help your introvert return to the classroom](#)[How to help your extrovert with at-home learning](#)