



During these uncertain times it is understandable that your child may have concerns about their health and well-being. In returning to school they may have many questions and even be worried or anxious. As a parent, it is helpful to adopt an approach that is patient, understanding and responsive. Being present and sensitive to their needs will foster their mental health and well-being. This can be accomplished by talking to them, offering reassurance and encouragement. Here are some more suggestions you may find helpful.

1 Validate worries and concerns by adopting a calm and attentive style. Let them know that what they are feeling is understandable given the uncertainty

- “It is normal that you feel worried or uneasy when returning to school”
- “I know this isn’t what you are used to and it’s hard to be in a class without your teacher”

3 Remind your child that while many things have changed, they will find that many things are the same as before

- They will be reunited with friends they have not seen in a while and can look forward to seeing them again
- There will also be adults in the building whom they know and with whom they can relate

5 Explain social distancing and expected hygiene practices that will occur at school

- Remind them that they will be asked to wash their hands frequently and to keep hands away from their face
- Point out that teachers or other school staff may be wearing masks or other protective gear

2 Remind your children of their ability to succeed with new or difficult situations

- Prepare them for the possibility that they might not be with their usual teacher and may be in a class with students from different grades
- Let them know that recess, lunch, and other transitions may feel and look different to them; they may have to play at a specific area in the yard with a predetermined set of selected toys or activities

4 Correct false, exaggerated, and negative thinking

- Let them know that despite some of the health rules that need to be put in place, teachers will be making the school day as fun and enjoyable as possible
- Point out that you and your family are healthy and actually doing well
- Let them know that you believe that schools are a safe and secure place for them

6 Model positive coping and thinking

- Remind children that they are healthy; should they become ill they will always be taken care of
- Tell your child how you practiced safe distancing today or how you treated someone less fortunate with kindness and compassion

Indicators that your child is struggling or in distress

- Physical reactions like trouble sleeping, eating, headaches, stomach aches, pains
- Emotional reactions that seem out of proportion given the nature of the problem
- Significant changes in appearance or behaviour
- Your child is engaging in high risk or dangerous behaviours

Remember that you must look after yourself to be able to look after your children. Be sure to take time for yourself, to eat well, rest and relax.