



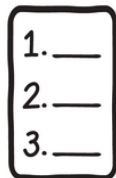
Wow! Where did the time go?

Summer is officially winding down and back-to-school time is quickly approaching. After a school year filled with restrictions, changes in teaching styles and fewer social interactions due to COVID-19, going back to school this August might feel exciting, yet stressful.

Some kids may be eager to get back into their routine, see friends and attend after-school activities. Others might be anxious or nervous, whether they feel worried about entering a new grade or are concerned with health and safety issues.

Preparing your child for the upcoming school year requires more than a trip to the store for supplies. This year especially, kids need to know what to expect before school begins. Being informed will help them prepare emotionally, which can lower stress levels and help them perform at their best, academically and socially.

Here are six ways you can help your child prepare for in-person or virtual school:



**1. Learn the nitty-gritty details.** Review your child's expected schedule and new routine for school. If they are a visual learner, hang a calendar that shows which days they will be at school and which days they will be at home. This can help the whole family stay on track! About 1-2 weeks before school starts, gradually (15 minutes each day) move your child's bedtime and wake-up time back to what they will be during the school year. For in-person learners, find out what COVID-19 protocols will be enforced this year, so your child knows whether to expect masks or other precautions.



**2. Check in with the pediatrician.** Routine check-ups are especially important this year, as many people have not been seeing the doctor regularly since springtime. Make sure vaccine records and sports physicals are up to date so kids can participate in activities they enjoy.



**3. Talk about feelings.** Kids who spent last year at home may be nervous to venture into classrooms or continue in virtual school. Listen to their concerns. Are they nervous to spend time away from you after a year of togetherness? Are they worried they won't make friends? Are they afraid they're lagging behind their peers in reading? Reassure your child that you'll figure out

how to overcome challenges together. Also, don't focus solely on concerns: Ask your child what they're excited to experience at school, then keep tabs on their progress.

**4. Discuss realistic expectations.** Ask your child what their goals are for the school year. Talk about ways to ease back into old learning habits. Does homework need to be done before screen time? Remind them. If they are learning from home, make sure to schedule in breaks, such as playtime and meals, and an end time.

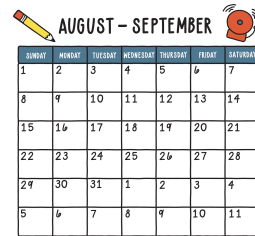


**5. Communicate with teachers.** Email teachers early about any school-related anxiety your child may have, including social concerns. If they're hesitant to return to school after a year at home, a teacher may be willing to seat your child near a friend to make the transition back to the classroom easier.



**6. Make the most of the present.** If your child is worried about the school year as a whole, find ways to focus on the present. Spend quality time together talking about school while doing fun activities. Practice mindfulness to help your child relax and appreciate each moment, instead of stressing about the future.

[Click here](#) to download our Back-to-School Countdown Calendar to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board. It is also available to [download in Spanish](#).



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Sincerely,  
Wolfson Children's Hospital

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