

PARENT RESOURCES

(FOR PARENTS)

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Top 10 List (Mental Health Edition)

- 1 Remind your child that they're not alone.** Nearly everyone feels behind in school this year. Hang in there and just do your best!
- 2 Help your child know what to expect.** Find out the school's policies this year. What's different about lockers, classrooms, lunch or anything else?
- 3 Praise all your child's efforts!** Life's more than grades. Recognize their curiosity, kindness and bravery.
- 4 Pay attention to your own anxiety.** Kids can sense anxiety. Talk to other adults to ease worry and get professional help if you need it.
- 5 Get enough sleep.** Preschoolers need 11-12 hours, school-aged kids need 10 hours and teens need 9-10 hours.
- 6 Schedule quality time together.** Just 1 hour makes a difference. Here's a topic of conversation: What are you most excited about this year?
- 7 Encourage daily movement.** Children need 1 hour of physical activity a day – riding a bike, a dance party or whatever gets them moving.
- 8 Keep a routine.** Waking up and going to bed at the same time every day improves mental health. (This goes for adults too!)
- 9 Identify ways to calm stress.** Taking deep breaths or holding something comforting in your hand (like a smooth rock) quietly relieve stress.
- 10 Just ask!** Ask your child if they're worried about being back in the classroom. Be a good listener and support them.

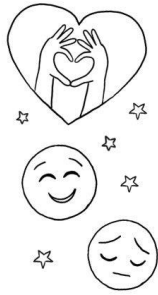
 Integral Care .org

Concerned about your child? Talk to their school counselor. Or call our 24/7 Helpline at **512-472-HELP (4357)** for free emotional support day or night. Press 1, then 1.

4 Steps To Help Kids Cope With BIG FEELINGS

1 EXPLAIN WHY FEELINGS ARE USEFUL

- Explain that feelings are part of our bodies. Just like our muscles, brain, and heart, our **emotions work to keep us healthy and safe.**
- Tell that strong and powerful emotion, like anger, **triggers a warning system** in our bodies. Our brain thinks we are in a dangerous situation and our body reacts in lots of different ways--a fast heartbeat, a red face, or maybe a headache.



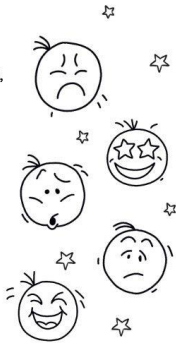
2 CREATE AN ACTION PLAN



- Tell kids that when they notice their rapid breathing, tense muscles, or upset stomach, it's a **cue to make choices** that take back control.
- When **kids are calm** (long car rides or bedtime work well) talk with them about the types of failures that trigger their strongest feelings: a poor grade on a spelling test, losing a soccer game at recess, or not understanding that homework question.

3 VALIDATE FEELINGS

- In their most difficult moments, kids need to know that **all feelings**--including ones about failing--are okay to have.
- **Ask questions** to better understand their frustrations, and communicate that you hear and accept exactly how they feel. Then ask, "What should we do to tackle this?"



4 CO-REGULATE



- Each child's capacity for managing feelings is different (and age-dependent). The prefrontal cortex, the area regulating emotions, **isn't even fully developed until early adulthood.**
- By responding to our child's frustrations with **warmth and support**, rather than reacting with our own high emotion, we can provide that experience.

27 Questions to Ask Your Child Instead of 'How Was School?'

FRIENDSHIPS

- Who made you laugh today?
- Who did you sit by at lunch?
- What do you like about "X" friend?

FEELINGS

- Did anything make you feel happy?
- Tell me about one thing you did today that made you proud.

LEARNING

- What do you wish you learned?
- What was the most challenging thing you did today?

CLASSROOM DYNAMICS

- What made your teacher smile?
- What did you create today?
- What games did you play?

3 STEPS

To GREAT Parent-Child Communication



1

LISTEN: In this step, you simply do that - listen. Resist the impulse to tell your child what to do, and, instead, gather data on what your child is thinking and what they are feeling.

2

VALIDATE: Next, reflect back to your child what you think they are thinking and feeling. You don't have to agree! Just focus on letting your child know that you get where they are coming from.

3

COACH: Now that your child is in the right mindset to listen to you, coach your child into learning the life lesson that will help your child get through this situation. Ask questions, provide encouragement, and set a realistic goal for your child to meet (if necessary).



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10 Activities to Create Connection with Your Child

1. Plan a special "date" night with just you two.
2. Have them teach you about something they love.
3. Let your child interview you and then interview them back.
4. Show them baby pictures of themselves and share your memories.
5. Cook their favorite meal without them asking.
6. Plant a garden together.
7. Share your life and childhood memories with them.
8. Create a craft together.
9. Choose a new recipe and cook it together.
10. Watch the clouds together & name shapes you see.