



Seasons for Growth

Transition back to school tips

Transitioning back to school after a natural disaster or traumatic event, such as bushfires, storms, cyclones and floods can cause feelings of anxiety, especially for those who find change challenging.

Anxiety may be particularly heightened this year, with the uncertainty and concerns surrounding the traumatic events.

Here are some suggestions to ease back into the school routine gently.



Routine

Start shifting back into a routine a week before school restarts:

- set wake-times (bed-times will follow – no naps!)
- turn off devices an hour before sleep
- re-establish breakfast, morning snack and lunch patterns
- read books

Prepare

Talk about any protection measures that will be in place at school so your child knows what to expect. It may be helpful to practice or role-play some of these, such as, greeting friends, or drop-off procedures. Ensure your child has everything they will need for school this year (e.g., uniform, well-fitting shoes and school bag).

Listen and reassure

Give your child opportunities to share any worries and listen carefully to their concerns. Reassure them it is okay to feel nervous and/or worried, but try not to share any of your own anxieties. Encourage positivity by reminding your child about the aspects of the school term they enjoy, such as seeing or making new friends, playing sport or beginning a new activity. Model trust, both in the school's protection measures and in your child's ability to handle things.

Choices

Giving kids choices can help them feel they have some control. Ask if there is anything that would help them with the first day (such as meeting a friend at the gate or taking a special item in their bag). Get children involved in:

- choosing a healthy breakfast
- sharing ideas for what to eat at recess and lunch
- helping pack their bags

Time

Lay out everything together the day before school starts. Give yourselves extra time on the first morning to get ready and get to school. Perhaps play some music you all enjoy at home or in the car. Take a few deep breaths together before your child leaves the house / before they go through the school gate.

Reconnect

Reconnect over an after school snack or by playing a game together. Acknowledge that some children don't talk much about their school day, but do provide opportunities for them to share any issues. Try asking if they would like to do anything differently for school tomorrow. If necessary, problem-solve the night before so they can sleep easy.



Get in touch

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MacKillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. We value an inclusive culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender diverse, intersex and asexual people (LGBTQIA+) have the right to be safe.