

TRANSITION BACK TO SCHOOL

THE WEEK BEFORE

By Monique Beglinger, Psychologist
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Monday

- Try on your school uniform
- Look at photos of your school and classroom
- Watch the virtual tour of your school on the school website
- Start going to bed at school term bed time

Caregivers:

- Talk to your child about what may be the same and different when they go back to school ie. (grades will be transitioning, not whole school straight away etc.)
- If you have a child who is very anxious about going back to school, a social story may help. Please ask your teacher for a copy of one.



Tuesday

- Talk to an adult about any worries you have about going back to school
- Start getting up at school wake up time
- Start having breakfast at your usual time for when you have school

Caregivers:

- It can help to re-introduce the school routine prior to going back to school and utilising the week before going back to school can assist with making the transition smoother. It may take time for your child to adjust to the routine of being back at school.
- This plan is just a guideline, amend it to suit your schedule and child's needs.



Wednesday

- Pack recess and a school lunch like you would for school
- Start having recess and lunch at school times
- Check you have all your school supplies ready for next week

Caregivers:

- Siblings may be disappointed about going back before or after their siblings, schedule an activity with them for when they are all home. Make sure not to schedule any fun family activities whilst some are at school where they will miss out.



Thursday

- Practice social skills: playing and talking like you would with a friend. Ask a sibling or adult to help you practice

Caregivers:

- Your child might be anxious about playing with their peers. Role play and helping them practice their play skills is a great way to boost their confidence with this skillset.



Friday

- Write/draw a list of all your favourite things about school
- Draw a picture of what you are most excited about for term 4
- Know your school morning routine ready for Monday morning

Caregivers:

- if you usually walk in to the school with your child, prepare them that this will look different as you will have to say goodbye at the gate. Role play this at home for practice. They may want to take an item from home that is going to help them feel 'brave' ie. button in their pocket, small soft toy etc.

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THE NIGHT BEFORE

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Sunday

- Pack your school bag
- Have your uniform and school shoes ready
- Go to bed early
- Limit technology use one hour before bed
- Get a good night's sleep
- Set an alarm for when you need to wake up tomorrow morning
- Think about what you are looking forward to about going back to school
- Talk to an adult about any worries you have about going back to school tomorrow

Caregivers:

- Ask your child how they feel about going back to school tomorrow.
- Make time to explore these feelings and emotion coach them through these ie. "It's ok to feel nervous/worried about going back to school, many children are feeling this way. Explore their emotions. What helps you when you feel worried? (brainstorm coping skills). Let's practice one right now, for eg. "let's take 3 deep breaths". Practice coping skills with them, they learn when they can see it in action, you modelling it for them is helping them to learn this skill.
- Watch: The Invisible String by Patrice Karst <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rZNTFf35Aw> or The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPUW1t9Gu4s>

TRANSITION BACK TO SCHOOL

FIRST DAY BACK

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Monday

- Start your school morning routine
- Talk to an adult if you feel worried about going to school
- You might like to take a family/pet photo or small item to keep in your pocket to remind you that you are brave
- Focus on what you are looking forward to about being back at school and take some deep breaths
- Talk to a teacher if you are feeling sad/worried at school
- Find a friend when you get to school and tell them why you are happy to see them or tell them about your weekend

Caregivers:

- Allow more time than usual for your child to get ready
- Keep goodbyes quick: kiss and a hug goodbye
- For anxious students:
- Remind them that they will see you at the end of the day.
- Emotion coaching: I know you feel sad/anxious/nervous, it's ok to feel _____. Suggest coping skill.
- Provide a transitional item from home that will help them to feel comforted ie. button in pocket, small soft toy they can hug, photo of family to look at etc.
- Walk your child to a school staff member at the gate who can walk with them in to the school and escort them where they need to go
- Have your child walk in to school with a friend, this may help to distract them and feel socially connected