

Re-Entry Reminders for Parents

- BREATHE. You've been waiting for this and now it's here!
- As soon as you feel comfortable given your family circumstances, please send them back to school and life. Ongoing fear and isolation when your family circumstances do not place your loved ones at significant risk is not good for their long-term mental health.
- Re-entry is not going to be perfect: rules will seem arbitrary and change often, it won't all make sense or be convenient, but it's a start... Talk with your children about what to expect. Encourage them to have an open mind.
- Kids and parents are rusty at the routine after a year at home, but we can get back in the swing of things.
- Patience with each other as we adjust. Empathy with what the kids are going through. Think about your tone of voice. Every conversation is an opportunity for connection.
- Focus on Social-Emotional health—it is necessary to get our children re-engaged in the world. The learning and support that comes from friendships and navigating their social worlds is immensely important—and school is the vehicle by which much of this occurs.

- Encourage resistant or socially anxious children to re-engage with the world. Know that challenging their fears is ultimately good for them—as they see themselves coping with hard situations, they will become more resilient. You can face this uphill battle with them now or in the fall (when it would be five months more entrenched). Hybrid plans allow for a slower re-entry which may help some anxious kids.
- Limit news media and be realistic about the COVID health concerns for their age group, as they are minimal. Vaccines are rolling out and should greatly reduce risk for adults.
- Anxiety decreases as one faces their fears. Avoidance of the stressor breeds more anxiety. Children who avoid school because they are anxious, do not have the opportunity to practice the skills they need to cope, feel less anxious, and begin participating in school/life/social situations again. You are not doing them any favors by allowing them to stay home as the world begins opening up. It is your job to support and love them through re-entry.
- They will be especially tired as they transition back. Prioritize sleep.
- Expect that your own grief, over what has been lost this past year, may well up as they re-enter. There has been loss associated with parenting each age group during this time. We have been “white-knuckling it” for an entire year and you may finally begin to let down.
- Stay in the present—make the Next Best Decision for your family, one day at a time.

- Academics: Take the long view—remember that they have to adjust, there has been learning loss, and now they will have to recalibrate being back in the classroom. Some kids have gotten great grades at home in their pajamas all year—but this isn't true thriving. Some kids' grades may slip initially, but stay supportive to help get them back on track.
- Tell them the stories of their own strength of character and resilience over the years. Remind them of their previous successes, adjustment to changes, and challenges that they've faced.
- Remember your silver linings as you navigate what you want re-entry to look like for your family. Only sign up for sports and extra-curricular that serve your child. There is no need to make up for lost time or overwhelm your child or yourself in this moment with too much, too fast.
- They have been valiant and so have you.



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