

Preparing your children to return to school during COVID-19

The coronavirus outbreak has caused major disruptions to daily life and children are feeling these changes deeply. While the return to school will be not only welcome but exciting for many students, others will be feeling anxious or frightened.

“My child is scared to go back to school. How can I make them feel at ease?”

Starting school or starting a new school year can be stressful at the best of times, let alone during a global pandemic. You can make him/her feel at ease by having an open conversation about what it is that's worrying him/her and letting them know that it's natural to feel anxious.

Children may feel nervous or reluctant to return to school, especially if they have been learning at home for months. Be honest – for example, you could go through some of the changes they may expect at school, such as needing to wear forms of protective clothing like masks. Children may also find it difficult being physically distanced from friends and teachers while at school – you could encourage them to think about other ways to bond and stay connected.

Reassure children about safety measures in place to keep students and teachers healthy, and remind children that they can also help prevent germs from spreading by washing their hands with soap and coughing or sneezing into their elbow.

Remind children about the positives – that they will be able to see their friends and teachers (if they are physically returning to the classroom) and continue learning new things.

For more information on supporting your child's mental health as they return to school during COVID-19, please visit: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-childs-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return>