



District Student Services

August 2021

BACK TO SCHOOL

Back-to-school stress and anxiety is normal and understandable for students, staff, and parents. Many may feel anxious about going back to school after the summer break, especially our students that have spent the past year on virtual learning. Others may feel nervous about starting school for the first time. Regardless of the situation, we can help ease the transition back to school by being able to recognize the symptoms of stress and anxiety the first week of school.



The Upstairs and Downstairs BRAIN

Upstairs Brain Downstairs Brain – SEL Sketches

Click on the brain video to learn about how our brains work with anxiety and other emotions.

Possible Signs of Anxiety

When students feel anxious, they may not know how to put their feelings into words. Instead look for cues in their behaviors. Students experiencing anxiety may exhibit the following:

- Appear more clingy
- Restlessness and/or fidgety
- Display changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Complain of stomachaches and/or headaches
- Express negative thoughts or worries
- Get upset or angry quickly
- Have bouts of unexplained crying
- Struggle to concentrate

If the [anxiety](#) lasts longer than two weeks or interferes with their daily routine, please refer the student to your school's mental health team (school counselor, social worker, psychologist).

Educator Tips for Managing Back to School Anxiety

First Weeks of School

- [Greet](#) students at the door
- Complete a team building [activity](#)
- Practice [mindfulness](#)
- Make a time capsule to open on the last day of school. Include pictures, goals, newspaper articles and more.
- Take a class photo
- Hold a scavenger hunt of the classroom
- Have students complete a getting to know you [activity](#)
- Read a [story](#) about the first day of school or back to school anxiety
- Read a [poem](#) about back to school

Throughout the Year

- Set flexible, realistic [goals](#) for the first day and week back based on establishing positive relationships and routines
- Prepare a welcome letter or email to send home during open house or the first day of school. Introduce yourself and let parents know how you can be reached if needed
- Encourage breathing and [physical exercise](#).
- Encourage walking, then [discuss](#) what happened along the way
- Practice [mindfulness](#)
- Creating a coping [toolbox](#)

Resources				
Title	Description	Level	Educator	Family
Family Education	The Best Books About Anxiety for Kids: Age-by-Age	All	X	X
Very Well Family	How Can You Ease Back-to-School Anxiety and Stress?	All	X	X
Florida Department of Education	Free Resources for Families and Friends	All	X	X
Hey Teach	6 Strategies to Relieve Teacher Anxiety	All	X	

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