



Talking to Your Child About Their Day

Counseling Resources for Back to School

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Supporting Your Child

Whether your child is tired after a long day or doesn't know what to share, it's common for kids to give one-word answers. Encourage them to say more by asking specific, open-ended questions.

Strategy:	Try Saying:	Instead of:
<p>Validate Feelings Let your child know that you understand what they said-by repeating back what you heard, without judgement-and that it's normal to feel that way.</p>	<p>"It's normal to feel nervous about going back to school."</p>	<p>"It will be fine! There's nothing to be nervous about."</p>
<p>Model Healthy Coping Skills Model positive ways you handle stress and involve your child in practicing healthy coping skills.</p>	<p>"I'm feeling overwhelmed by everything that is going on. I'm going on a walk to relax. Want to join me?"</p>	<p>"Everything's fine! We'll get through it."</p>
<p>Keep Your Cool Be careful not to pass along any anxiety you may have.</p>	<p>"Take it one day at a time. I know you will do your best."</p>	<p>"I think this is going to be a really challenging year."</p>

"What was the funniest thing that happened today?"

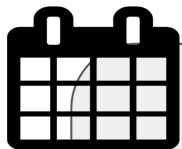
"What was your favorite part of the day?"

"What was the hardest thing you had to do today?"

Advocating for Your Child

Even though your child spends a lot of their time at school, you still know them best.

- Frequently, check in with your child's teacher and be open and honest about your child's strengths and needs.
- If your child is facing challenges outside of school, let the staff know what is going on and that your child may need extra support throughout the day.



Help everyone prioritize tasks and stay organized by hanging up a family calendar with upcoming projects, deadlines, and test dates.



5-year-olds typically need 10-13 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.

6-12-year-olds typically need 9 to 12 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.

Practicing Healthy Habits

Practicing healthy habits as a family helps support your child's mind and body while positively impacting their mood, focus, and behavior.

Routines. Knowing what to expect can help create a sense of comfort and security. Try to maintain simple routines to keep things as predictable as you can (e.g., keeping consistent bedtimes.)

Nutrition. Children need to fuel their bodies to fuel their minds. It is recommended children drink plenty of water and eat a nutritionally balanced diet.

Sleep. Turn off digital screens and electronic devices an hour before bedtime, and keep devices out of the bedroom to get quality rest.

Activity. All kids need time to be active, play and have fun. Encourage your child to incorporate movement into the day by going on walks, stretching, riding a bike, or putting on music and dancing.

Coping. Whether it's taking some deep breaths, playing a game, drawing or talking to someone, encourage your child to practice healthy ways of coping with their feelings and handling stress.



Simple Coping Skills Ideas for Kids

As kids grow older, they face new stressors and challenges. By helping your child develop healthy coping skills (tools to help them manage their feelings and reduce stress), you're helping them become more resilient (better able to handle life's ups and downs).

Everyone is different, and what works one day may not work the next. Encourage your child to try lots of different coping strategies to help them find what works best for them. The options are limitless, but keep in mind that it is difficult to learn something new when we are anxious, tired, distracted or upset. Be sure to teach and practice new coping skills when everyone is calm.

 Be active	 Find your calm	 Get creative	 Connect with others	 Shift your mindset
Put on music and dance	Take some deep breaths	Color, draw or paint	Cuddle or play with your pet	Think of something positive
Build with Legos or blocks	Listen to music or sing a song	Play with Play-Doh or sand	Read a book with someone	Focus on one thing you're grateful for
Do 10 jumping jacks	Close your eyes and count to 10 or backward from 100	Play an instrument	Play a game with a friend or family member	Identify your top three strengths
Run in place for 20 seconds	Take a quiet break or rest	Make up a song	Work with someone on a puzzle	Think about something you're looking forward to
Bounce a ball or play catch	Have a drink of cold water	Write about your thoughts or feelings	Write someone a letter	Focus on the present moment
Go for a walk, run or hike	Blow bubbles	Create a dance	Share your feelings with someone you trust	Think about something that makes you laugh
Squeeze a stress ball	Think of a calm, happy place	Write a poem	Ask for help	Practice reframes ("I didn't fail; I learned")