

Back-to-School



Anxiety Toolkit

Going back to school can be exciting and a little scary.
Here are 5 tools to support your child's journey back into the classroom:

Tool 1: Know the Signs of Anxiety

Anxiety in young children often shows up in their body or their behaviors before they can use their words. Feeling sick or nauseous before school, difficulty sleeping, repeatedly asking to stay home, or having tantrums during drop-off are common signs that your child may be struggling with some back-to-school anxiety.



Tool 2: Help Your Child Name the Feeling

Children are always learning about different emotions. You can help them name their feelings by saying "It sounds like you are feeling (nervous, scared, etc.)". Remind your child that having worries before doing new things is VERY common. Consider using a feelings chart to help your child practice naming all their feelings!

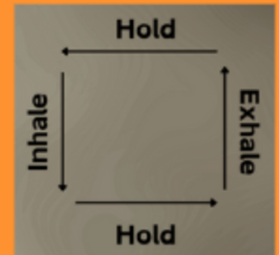
Tool 3: Breathing Tool

Box breathing is a great way to calm the nervous system and is easy to learn!

Teach your child these 4 steps:

1. **Inhale:** Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of four.
2. **Hold:** Hold your breath for a count of four.
3. **Exhale:** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of four.
4. **Hold:** Hold your breath again for a count of four.

Repeat this cycle as many times as needed!



Tool 4: Reframing Tool

Anxiety often centers on the worst possible outcomes. Help your child "reframe" their worries and look at all the other positive or neutral outcomes that might happen!

For example: If your child says "What if I don't make any friends?" You can say "I wonder what other things might happen....what if you learn something cool about someone new! I can't wait to hear about your day!"

Tool 5: Create a 'Bravery Box'

A Bravery Box can be a way to remind children ways they can handle big feelings. Add items like a photo of a loved one or a pet, a fidget toy, a special note from a parent or guardian, a calming scent, or a card with coping statements, such as "It's okay to feel nervous, grown-ups feel that way too sometimes" or "I can do this!"



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