

Getting School Ready After Lockdown



5 Top Tips



There have been lots of changes to family life during lockdown and it may take time to get back into the swing of school life. Hopefully, the advice and information in this handout will help you and your family get ready for school starting again.

1 Schedule your days like school, including increased outdoor time

Get your child to start going to bed earlier so they can wake up earlier in the morning.

Plan to have everyone dressed and ready by 9am to do any schoolwork you can.

Set break and lunch times at similar times to the normal school day.

Gradually increase the number of times you go outside the home. This will help your child (and you) adjust to the idea of being away from home/around other people for longer periods. You could go for a walk to the park or to other family members homes (keeping a distance) or you could do the walk or journey to school in advance.

2 Make a list of the things that need to be done before going back, and get your child involved in doing them

Making a list may feel like its never ending, so having it all written down in one place will be helpful.

Try to put things in order of priority and get your child to help with any tasks then can!



Things they could help with:

- Planning packed lunches
 - Choosing snacks
 - Organising uniform
 - Packing school bag
- And lots more!



3 Time to Talk! Check in with your child about how they are feeling

Talk with your child about how they are feeling about going back to school. Check if they have any concerns or questions about any of this.

Be curious and really listen to what your child says (and doesn't say) observe their reactions. For younger children you might have to guess or ask them to draw their feelings instead. Check you have understood and give them a chance to tell you if you have got it wrong.

Be accepting of any feelings they express and show you understand. E.g. if your child feels frightened about going back a helpful response could be 'I understand, we can all feel frightened.' This will help them to open up more.



4 Plan the first morning back to school with your child

This can be a way to have a (relatively!) stress free and smooth transition back to school. Discussing and planning together with your child about what they need to do in the morning will also help them understand what will be happening so they can feel more prepared.



It's good to start the planning the night before, talk to your child about the importance of sleep and an appropriate bedtime. Tell your child what time they'll be going to bed and getting up the next morning, so they have time to process and it's not a big surprise Sunday night.

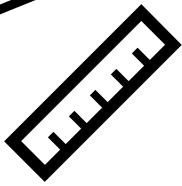


Talk to your child about what needs to happen the first morning before school. Think about the things you've already organised together like the snacks and packing their school bag, and how it will all fit into the morning routine.



A checklist can help make this fun for your child, with them ticking off each step until they are out the door and at school (an example checklist is attached). Some children may need a bit more encouragement and giving praise or no/low-cost reward for completing these tasks may also be helpful. Having a calm morning getting ready for school will mean your child is better prepared for learning.

The School Morning



5 Thinking back and Looking Ahead

This is a really important tip! Thinking back on the time in lockdown and the things to look forward to and get excited about now.



Have a chat with your child about what they have gotten up to at home, or their favourite thing they've done.

You could draw some pictures of activities you've done and have your child take them into school to share with their teacher/friends.

This exercise will help you think about the positive things that have happened since being at home (however small), things your child has achieved or liked. These all add up and you may find you have achieved quite a lot!

Whether it was getting some schoolwork done, drawing, painting or exploring outside, spending more time together, these are all positive things to remember about this time.

Next, take some time to think about what is ahead. Ask your child what they are looking forward to about going back to school. Who are they excited to see? What will they do first when they get to the playground?

You can also ask about things outside of school that they're looking forward to; Playing out with friends, visiting family you've only been able to video call, giving hugs again, there's lots of exciting things to come!

Plan some things to do as restrictions are lifted:

- Playing in the park
- Going to the cinema
- Sports activities and clubs



There's lots to look back on from this strange and difficult time, Remembering what you have achieved or overcome as a family can help you feel more hopeful and ready for the next steps ahead, including getting back into the swing of school life!

