



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local Mental Health Expert Shares Seven Ways Parents Can Help Children Manage Back-to-School Anxiety

As students prepare to return to the classroom, experts remind families that nervousness is common—and support can make all the difference.

As the new school year approaches, many children are looking forward to seeing friends, meeting teachers, and returning to familiar routines. For others, however, the transition back to school can bring feelings of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty.

Mental health professionals are encouraging parents and caregivers to recognize that back-to-school anxiety is common and manageable when addressed early with understanding, preparation, and support.

"Many parents expect anxiety to look like nervousness, but children often show anxiety in different ways," said **Haley Ischer, Behavioral Health Therapist at The Center for Youth and Family Solutions**. "A child may complain of stomachaches, struggle to sleep, become irritable, or suddenly resist getting ready for school. These behaviors are often signs that a child feels overwhelmed and needs support."

According to mental health experts, transitions can be particularly difficult for children who have experienced trauma, frequent school changes, anxiety disorders, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, or other challenges that affect emotional regulation and adjustment.

To help families prepare for a successful start to the school year, **The Center for Youth and Family Solutions** is sharing seven practical strategies parents can use to support children experiencing back-to-school anxiety.

Seven Ways to Help Your Child Manage Back-to-School Anxiety

1. Establish Routines Early

Begin adjusting bedtimes, wake-up times, and daily schedules one to two weeks before school starts. Predictable routines help children feel safe and prepared.

2. Acknowledge Feelings

Let children know it is okay to feel nervous. Listen without judgment and reassure them that many students experience similar worries.

3. Practice Coping Skills

Teach simple techniques such as deep breathing, positive self-talk, and grounding exercises to help children manage anxious feelings.

4. Visit the School

If possible, attend an open house or walk around the school before the first day. Familiarity can reduce fear of the unknown.

5. Build Social Connections

Encourage opportunities to reconnect with classmates or meet new peers before school begins. Social confidence often reduces anxiety.

6. Focus on Small Successes

Celebrate progress, whether it's getting on the bus, entering the classroom, or making it through the first day. Small victories build resilience.

7. Partner with School Staff

Teachers, counselors, social workers, and school administrators can play an important role in supporting a child's transition back to school.

When Parents Should Seek Additional Support

While most children adjust within the first few weeks of school, persistent anxiety may warrant professional help.

Parents should consider consulting a pediatrician, school counselor, therapist, or psychologist if a child:

- Regularly misses school due to anxiety
- Experiences severe emotional distress
- Struggles with sleep for an extended period
- Has panic attacks
- Shows significant withdrawal from friends, family, or activities
- Experiences anxiety that interferes with daily functioning

"Early intervention can make a significant difference," said **[Spokesperson Name]**. "When families, schools, and mental health professionals work together, children learn that anxiety is something they can manage rather than something that controls them."



Supporting Children Through the Transition

Mental health professionals emphasize that some anxiety during major transitions is normal and expected. By maintaining routines, encouraging healthy coping skills, and providing reassurance, parents can help children build confidence and develop the resilience needed for a successful school year.

The key message for families is simple: most children adjust with support, preparation, and encouragement.

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About The Center for Youth & Family Solutions

The Center for Youth & Family Solutions is a nonprofit behavioral health and child welfare agency serving children, youth, and families throughout central Illinois and eastern Iowa. CYFS provides trauma-responsive counseling, foster care services, youth programming, and family support with the mission of helping individuals build safe, healthy, and resilient lives.