FOR FAMILIES

Back to School Toolkit
Start Your School Year Confident and Connected

The start of a new school year brings exciting new opportunities to learn and grow. As students return to learning in school, virtually, or a combination of both, those breakthrough moments can and will happen.

The Kohl’s Healthy at Home Back to School Toolkit is designed to help caregivers create an environment that nurtures everyone’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Use the chart below as a guide to help make each day a healthy one, for yourself and the children you care for.

Build a Healthy at Home Daily Routine

**Morning**
- Pause for a mindful moment
- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Brush teeth

**Afternoon**
- Connect with peers & classmates
- Take an active screen break
- Choose a healthy snack

**Evening**
- Share family time
- Add fruits & vegetables at dinner
- Relax before bed

Get more Healthy at Home Resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org | #KOHLSHEALTHYATHOME
Together, Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Kohl’s are encouraging families to create a healthier home life. Learn More & Get Free Resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org #KohlsHealthyAtHome

**A HEALTHY DAY CHECKLIST**

- Spend 2 minutes brushing your teeth in the morning and before bed.
- Whenever you’re feeling stressed or anxious, take 5-10 long, deep breaths.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water today.
- Try to limit sugary drinks like soda and eat one fruit or vegetable with every meal.
- Get at least 60 minutes of physical activity today.
- Reserve at least 9 hours for a great, full night of sleep.

Improved sleep quality can lead to improvements in health, well-being, and academic achievement.

Social-emotional health is closely linked to physical health.

Water is a natural, healthy and sugar-free way to stay hydrated.

Here are a few easy ways you and your family can make healthier choices every day.

**HYGIENE**

Brushing your teeth – it’s the perfect start to a healthy day!

**SLEEP**

Regular physical activity supports a healthy body and a healthy mind.

**SELF-CARE**

Healthy eating supports a strong body and mind.

**HYDRATION**

Healthy eating supports a strong body and mind.

**ACTIVITY**

Water is a natural, healthy and sugar-free way to stay hydrated.

**NUTRITION**

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#KohlsHealthyAtHome
Feelings Chart

Emotions are a big part of our health and well-being. Each person will experience emotions differently and the way we feel can change day-to-day. To successfully manage our emotions, we must first identify how we feel and acknowledge that no feeling is “good” or “bad.” All feelings are useful information to help us navigate our world with success!

### HOW TO USE
- Print and post this chart somewhere visible, like the refrigerator
- Every day, family members and educators can guide young people to name their emotions, then provide support through active listening and encouragement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right now, I am feeling ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Self-Care Tips for Parents & Caregivers

As a parent, grandparent or caregiver, you may be juggling multiple roles while prioritizing your family's health and safety.

But don’t forget: your health matters, too! Prioritizing your own well-being can help you be a better caregiver for your children and family members.

HOW TO USE
Try these 5 psychology-backed tips to relieve stress, boost physical and mental health, and help you continue supporting your family.

Take care of your body
When you can, take time to exercise, eat fruits and vegetables and maintain a healthy sleep routine. Remember - it’s OK to take small steps!

Focus on what you can control
When we are overwhelmed, it can be easy to get stuck in a cycle of worry and stress. Practice identifying what you can control (e.g., making a list, calling a friend) and accepting what you can’t (e.g., child’s school assignments, the news).

Congratulate yourself for a job well done
Remind yourself that everything you are doing to support loved ones is making a difference and it is OK not to “do it all.” Breathing and living one day at a time is a huge accomplishment!

Give yourself some space
Choose one place within your environment to call your own, such as a room, desk or spot in your home. If you are working from home with other people, try using a sign or cue to indicate when you are available to interact. Watch this short video for even more tips to create personal space in a busy home.

Schedule a daily “worry window”
If you are having anxious thoughts regularly, try scheduling 15 minutes each day to focus on those thoughts or write them down. Outside of this scheduled time, practice focusing on the moment and reminding yourself to save your concerns for your next “worry window.”
Eating Healthy at Home Recipes

HEALTHY EATING FUELS HEALTHY FAMILIES

Recipes provided by CHOPCHOP

Versiones en español disponibles en KohlsHealthyAtHome.org/Recipes
Apple Pie Smoothie

This smoothie has protein-rich almonds and yogurt to give you lots of energy — and the cinnamon and vanilla gives it a rich sweetness that might remind you of a favorite dessert!

**KITCHEN GEAR**
- Cutting board
- Sharp knife (adult needed)
- Measuring cup
- Measuring spoons
- Blender (adult needed)

**INGREDIENTS**
- ¾ cup plain low fat yogurt or whole milk yogurt
- ½ cup low-fat or whole milk
- 2 tablespoons raw almonds* (*If you’re allergic to nuts, skip the almonds and substitute 2 tablespoons old-fashioned oats.)
- ½ apple, cored and sliced
- 1 overripe banana, sliced (frozen if possible)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 ice cubes

**HANDS-ON TIME: 5 MINUTES**

**TOTAL TIME: 5 MINUTES**

**MAKES: 2 SERVINGS**

**INSTRUCTIONS**
1. Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on a counter.

2. Put all the ingredients in the blender.

3. Put the top on tightly. Turn on the blender to medium speed and blend until the ice is chopped and the mixture is smooth, 30–60 seconds.

4. Divide the smoothie equally between 2 glasses and serve right away, or store in a thermos or covered in the refrigerator up to 4 hours.

**QUICK TIP**
To help make any smoothie colder and thicker, it’s great to have slices of frozen banana ready to go. It’s easy:

1. Peel an overripe banana.

2. Use a butter knife to slice it into thin rounds.

3. Put the slices in a resealable plastic bag and put it in the freezer.

Get more healthy resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org
Cheesy Scrambled Eggs

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. This one is filled with just the kinds of ingredients to get you going! Add some toast and fruit and you’re all set!

HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES	TOTAL TIME: 30 MINUTES	MAKES: 2 SERVINGS

KITCHEN GEAR
• Cutting board
• Sharp knife (adult needed)
• Small bowl
• Fork or whisk
• Large skillet or frying pan (nonstick, if you have one)
• Measuring spoons
• Rubber spatula
• Potholder

INGREDIENTS
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon olive or canola oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil, flat-leaf parsley, or cilantro leaves. If no fresh herbs, use 1 teaspoon dried basil.
¼ cup shredded cheddar, mozzarella, or Swiss cheese (Whatever kind you like is good.)

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on a counter.

2. Crack each egg on the rim of the bowl and add it to the bowl. Throw away the shell.

3. Using a fork or whisk, gently beat the eggs until they are golden yellow, about 1 minute.

4. Place the skillet on the stove and turn the heat to medium.

5. Let it heat up and after about 2 minutes, carefully add the oil.

6. Add the beaten eggs to the pan and when the edges start to get firm, add the herbs and cheeses.

7. Using spatula, move the eggs around so that the raw part touches the bottom of the pan and gets cooked.

8. Keep moving the eggs around until the eggs aren’t runny anymore, about 4 minutes in all. Slide onto a plate and serve immediately.

Get more healthy resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org
Pasta with Peas

What does “comfort food” mean to you? To us, it means this perfect, familiar dish that’s quick and easy. You actually cook the peas just by draining the pasta over them in the colander!

HANDS-ON TIME: 15 MINUTES  TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES  MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

KITCHEN GEAR
• Colander
• Large pot
• Measuring spoons
• Measuring cup
• Pot holders
• Mug
• Large serving bowl

INGREDIENTS
2 cups (about 10 ounces) frozen peas (do not defrost them)
1 pound small-size whole-wheat pasta shapes (such as shells or mini-penne)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
½ cup grated parmesan cheese
½ teaspoon kosher salt
black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on a counter.

2. Put the peas in the colander and put the colander in the sink.

3. Fill the pot halfway with water and bring to a boil over high heat.

4. Add the pasta and cook until tender, about 12 minutes. Just before the pasta is done, use the mug to carefully scoop out 1/2 cup or so of cooking water and set it aside.

5. Drain the pasta in the colander with the peas.

6. Put the pasta and peas in the bowl and add the oil, butter, salt, and pepper. Mix well. If the pasta seems dry, add some of the reserved cooking water, then mix again. Add the Parmesan cheese and serve right away.

FANCY THAT!
Make it Spinach-y: Add 2 cups chopped spinach when you add the oil.

Make it Herby: Add 1 cup chopped fresh basil or parsley leaves when you add the oil.

Get more healthy resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org
Chicken Your Way

This is an easy, versatile chicken recipe. You can season the chicken any way you like by adding different ingredients to the dressing. This chicken is good alone, as part of a grain bowl, or on top of a salad.

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 35 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

KITCHEN GEAR
• Cutting board
• Sharp knife (adult needed)
• Large bowl
• Vegetable peeler
• Measuring cup
• Measuring spoons
• Grater or zester
• Small bowl
• Whisk
• Tongs or salad servers

INGREDIENTS
1 garlic clove, peeled and minced or put through a garlic press (or 2 cloves if desired)
2 tablespoons balsamic or red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons olive oil
¼ teaspoon salt
black pepper
2 whole boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut in half, trimmed of fat, and patted dry with a paper towel

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on a counter.

2. Make the dressing: Put the garlic, vinegar, 2 tablespoons oil, salt, and pepper (and any of the Try This ingredients below) in the bowl and mix well. Now taste it. Does it need more salt or pepper? More seasoning? If so, add it and taste again, then set the dressing aside.

3. Put the skillet on the stove and turn the heat to medium-high. When the skillet is hot, add the remaining 2 teaspoons oil. Add the chicken breasts, one at a time, and cook until lightly browned and cooked through, 5 to 8 minutes per side, depending on the thickness of the chicken. (To check that the chicken is cooked thoroughly, cut a piece in half: it should look white all the way through.)

Put the chicken on the cutting board and cut it into thin slices. Put the slices in the bowl with the dressing and mix gently. Serve right away.

TRY THESE OPTIONS:
Curry: Add 1 teaspoon sweet or hot curry powder to the dressing.

Spicy: Add 1 teaspoon chili powder and 1 teaspoon ground cumin to the dressing.

Ginger: Add 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh ginger and 1 tablespoon soy sauce to the dressing (leave out the salt).

Herby: Add 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs (such as basil, cilantro, mint, or parsley) to the dressing.

Get more healthy resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org
Just like learning how to eat healthy and be active, students and staff need social-emotional skills to thrive and lead happy, healthy lives. Together with Sanford Harmony, Healthier Generation is helping schools connect social-emotional learning and wellness to foster healthier classrooms and communities.

These Quick Connection Cards from Sanford Harmony contain ideas for brief discussions and activities that provide peers with opportunities to share, think, collaborate, and have fun together. In this printer-friendly deck you will find:

- **Quick Conversation Cards**
  Discussion questions that allow students to get to know one another.

- **Quick Collaboration Cards**
  Ideas for fun activities that promote joint problem solving and cooperation.

- **Quick Community Builders**
  Enjoyable activities designed to bring students in the classroom together to work and play as a team.

For more great resources to help build harmony in your classroom, visit SanfordHarmony.org.
What is your favorite holiday? Why?

If you could be in a movie, which one would you be in, and what character would you play?

What is something you can’t live without?

What would be your perfect day?

What is something that you have learned from someone close to you?

If you could choose to be anywhere in nature, (e.g., beach, mountains, icecap, desert) where would you be and why?

What is something for which you are thankful? How do you show that you are thankful?

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” - Henry Ford

What is something that you have accomplished as part of a team?

“What is something that you have accomplished as part of a team?”

“Today you are you, that is truer than true. There is no one alive who is youer than you.” - Dr. Seuss

What has made you feel proud?
COLLABORATIONS

ACROSTIC POETRY
Create an acrostic poem from the word ______ with your buddy. An acrostic poem is when the first letters of each line spell out a word.

Materials: paper and pencils

BACK-TO-BACK BUDDY BALL
Stand back-to-back with your buddy with a ball placed between you. Walk across the room without letting the ball fall to the ground.

Materials: balls

BACKWARDS SCATTERGORIES
Make a list of items with your buddy that begin with the letter ______, and fall under a certain category (e.g., animals, fruit, places).

Materials: paper and pencils

COLLABORATIONS

KEEP IT UP
Toss a balloon back and forth with your buddy. Keep it off the floor as long as possible.

Materials: balloons

CREATURE CREATION
Build a creature with your buddy out of recyclable objects.

Materials: recyclable objects (cardboard tubes, string, paper, plastic bottles, etc.), tape or glue

COLLABORATIONS

LILY PAD POND
Use two pieces of large paper as “lily pads.” Cross the room with your buddy, stepping only on the two lily pads, without touching the “water” (the floor).

Materials: paper (letter size for older kids; larger for younger kids)

TRUST WALK
Verbally guide your buddy across the room while he or she is blindfolded or has his or her eyes closed, then switch turns.

Materials: classroom objects (e.g., stapler, paper, glue, etc.)

COLLABORATIONS

POETRY PROMPT
Choose a classroom object with your buddy and write a short poem or rhyme about it.

Materials: classroom objects (e.g., stapler, paper, glue, etc.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMMUNITY BUILDERS</strong></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRUIT SALAD</strong></td>
<td><strong>DO THE WAVE</strong></td>
<td><strong>ARE YOU WITH ME?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting in a circle, with one person in the center (without a seat), everyone is assigned one of four kinds of fruit (e.g., apple, banana, strawberry, pear). The person in the center calls out a fruit, and those people quickly get up and change seats. The last person standing calls out the next fruit. If “fruit salad” is called, everyone gets up and finds a new seat.</td>
<td>In a large circle, one person begins by lifting his or her hands up into the air and bringing them back down, and is quickly followed by the next person, followed by the next (and so on), creating a “wave” around the circle.</td>
<td>Sit in a circle with one person standing in the center. The person in the center states one thing about him or herself. Anyone who shares that commonality has to quickly get up and change seats. The last person standing is the next to share in the center of the circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY BUILDERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>WANDER BREAK</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADD A BEAT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TELEPHONE</strong></td>
<td>One person begins by creating a beat, using only his or her body (clapping, snapping, whistling, etc.). The next person joins in with a new sound or variation of the beat. Each person adds a new sound until everyone is participating.</td>
<td>One person starts as the announcer and everyone else as wanderers. When the announcer says “Wander!” everyone slowly walks around the room. When the announcer calls out “break” and a number (e.g., &quot;Break four!&quot;) everyone gathers into groups of that number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PASS IT</strong></td>
<td><strong>CLAP, SLAP, SNAP</strong></td>
<td><strong>FOLLOW THE LEADER</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td>Sitting in a circle, the group has to quickly pass the ball around as the leader calls out different instructions (e.g., pass behind your back, pass to every other person, move closer together, move farther apart, etc.).</td>
<td>One person starts as the leader and creates a clap, slap, snap pattern for the whole group to follow. Switch leaders and repeat.</td>
<td>Form a line with everyone’s hands on the shoulders of the person in front of him or her. Follow the leader as he or she navigates the classroom and calls out different pretend obstacles that will change the manner of movements (e.g., sticky mud, slippery ice, wind blowing from the front, lily pads across the water etc.).</td>
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**Materials:** ball

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10 Tips for Taking Screen Breaks

Although computers, televisions, and phones can provide us with unique benefits, it is important to regularly take breaks from screens.

Physical inactivity, such as sitting behind a screen all day, can increase one’s risk of cognitive and physical health issues,¹ ² and may get in the way of family time. However, there are many ways we can balance screen time, physical activity, and family connection – check out these tips from experts and parents for taking healthy screen breaks:³

**1.** Remove television from kids’ bedrooms so they are not tempted to watch it without supervision or right before bed, which can disrupt sleep

**2.** “We use a timer for screen time – after an hour each day the phone shuts off and is only used for calls and texts.”

- Jessica, parent of 1

**3.** If screens need to be used for longer periods of time (e.g., schoolwork, jobs), set an alarm that reminds you to move and stretch every 30 minutes

**4.** Make family mealtime a screen-free environment; turn off the television and have family members store their phones in a large bowl during meals

(Bonus: Try these engaging mealtime conversation starters!)

**5.** “Entertain kids with non-screen activities, such as games, sports, and crafts!”

- Melanie, parent of 2

**6.** “As a parent I can’t have a double standard on the screen time, so the 1-2 hour limits we set go to us too.”

- Michael, parent of 2

**7.** Encourage family reading time as a screen-free wind-down activity before bed

(Bonus: Let kids pick out the book to read)

**8.** “My kids get to have screen time only after their chores and daily responsibilities are done.”

- BreAnne, parent of 4

**9.** Ask kids and teens to help with daily tasks such as cooking and cleaning

(Bonus: Let kids pick out the foods they want to help cook)

**10.** Adults and teens: Set a positive example for younger children by practicing these tips with your family!

**REFERENCES**


Get more Healthy at Home Resources at [KohlsHealthyAtHome.org](http://KohlsHealthyAtHome.org) | #KOHLSHEALTHYATHOME
All-Weather Family Activities

Regular physical activity is good for people of all ages, because it can help:

- Reduce stress
- Improve sleep
- Increase academic performance
- Lower blood pressure
- Prevent illness and disease
- Boost mental health

Kids need 60 minutes of physical activity every day! Both youth and adults can spread out their physical activity by engaging in short bouts of movement throughout the day.

To help you get started, here are some simple, inexpensive, all-weather activities that the whole family can enjoy together!

Warm-Weather Activities

- Take a hike
  (Bonus: Try a scavenger hunt hike!)
- Play tag or Hide-and-Seek outside
- Plant an outdoor garden
- Try roller skating or rollerblading
- Go swimming in a local pool or turn on the sprinklers to splash around
- Help family and neighbors by pulling weeds or mowing the lawn
- Create “active art” by drawing hopscotch or four-square spaces on the sidewalk with chalk and then challenging your friends or family to a game!
- Participate in a local race with friends and family, such as a 5k
- Take a bike ride
  (Bonus: Ask to help with a bike-to-school day at your child’s school)

I like walking with my family, especially at our local zoo!  
- Carol, age 65

We enjoy walking and biking around our local parks together.  
- Kiran, age 39

Get more Healthy at Home Resources at KohlsHealthyAtHome.org | #KOOLSHHEALTHYATHOME
All-Weather Family Activities

Cool-Weather Activities

- Rake leaves and jump into the pile!
- Step into rainboots and splash in the puddles
- Help family and neighbors by raking leaves or shoveling snow
- Go sledding
- Challenge your family to a snow-building competition
- Get in the seasonal spirit by going apple-picking, strolling a corn maze, or browsing a pumpkin patch
- Hand-deliver items that are sure to warm your neighbors’ hearts, such as homemade holiday cards and healthy apple cider

I love to be physically active with my family by playing catch with my football.
- Jovon, age 13

I like to go ice-skating together!
- Arielle, age 14

Indoor Activities

- Try these quick physical activity break cards – no equipment necessary!
- Turn on the music and have a dance party
- Do some spring cleaning by sorting old food, clothes, books, and other items (Bonus: Donate any usable items that you no longer want to charity)
- Help with household tasks like dusting, vacuuming, and mopping
- Play a game of indoor Hide-and-Seek
- Go shopping at a local mall
- Walk or run up the stairs 10 times
- Volunteer at a local organization, such as an animal shelter or a food bank
- Act out a scene from a favorite book or movie or put on a play for family members!
- Encourage your local schools to open their indoor facilities (e.g., basketball court, weight room) to the community when school is not in session

“My favorite activity is showing my family my gymnastics exercises – like frog jumps, wall handstands and planks!”
- Amelia, age 7
For many families, back to school planning will look different this year than it has in previous years. Your school will have new policies in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. You may also be starting the school year with virtual learning components. Whatever the situation, these checklists are intended to help parents, guardians, and caregivers, plan and prepare for the upcoming school year.

Some of the changes in schools’ classroom attendance or structure may include:

- **Cohorts:** Dividing students and teachers into distinct groups that stay together throughout an entire school day during in-person classroom instruction. Schools may allow minimal or no interaction between cohorts (also sometimes referred to as pods).
- **Hybrid:** A mix of virtual learning and in-class learning. Hybrid options can apply a cohort approach to the in-class education provided.
- **Virtual/at-home only:** Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.

Deciding between in-person and virtual learning?

Related: See our decision tool to help you think through school re-entry and the choices that your child's school is offering: Decision-Making Tool for Parents and Guardians

Planning for in-person classes

Going back to school this fall will require schools and families to work together even more than before. Schools will be making changes to their policies and operations with several goals: supporting learning; providing important services, such as school meals, extended daycare, extracurricular activities, and social services; and limiting the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Teachers and staff can teach and encourage preventive behaviors at school. Likewise, it will be important for families to emphasize and model healthy behaviors at home and to talk to your children about changes to expect this school year. Even if your child will attend school in-person, it is important to prepare for the possibility of virtual learning if school closes or if your child becomes exposed to COVID-19 and needs to stay home.

CDC has created a checklist to help with back to school planning for school year (SY) 2020-2021. If your school uses a hybrid model, you may want to review both the in-person and virtual/at-home learning checklists.
In-Person Learning Checklist (PDF version)

Interactive and downloadable PDF

Planning checklist with editable fields for making notes

- Download
- Edit and save
- Print

You can also see a non-PDF version of the checklist below.

Planning for In-Person Classes

Alternate languages: Spanish | Creole

In-Person Learning Checklist (web version)

Actions to take and points to consider

- Check in with your child each morning for signs of illness. If your child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, they should not go to school.
- Make sure your child does not have a sore throat or other signs of illness, like a cough, diarrhea, severe headache, vomiting, or body aches.
- If your child has had close contact to a COVID-19 case, they should not go to school. Follow guidance on what to do when someone has known exposure.
- Identify your school point person(s) to contact if your child gets sick.
  - Name of school point person(s)
  - Contact information
- Be familiar with local COVID-19 testing sites in the event you or your child develops symptoms. These may include sites with free testing available.
- Make sure your child is up-to-date with all recommended vaccines, including for flu. All school-aged children should get an influenza flu vaccine every season, with rare exceptions. This is especially important this year because we do not yet know if being sick with COVID-19 at the same time as the flu will result in more severe illness.
- Review and practice proper hand washing techniques at home, especially before and after eating, sneezing, coughing, and adjusting a mask or cloth face covering. Make hand washing fun and explain to your child why it’s important.
- Be familiar with how your school will make water available during the day. Consider packing a water bottle.
- Develop daily routines before and after school—for example, things to pack for school in the morning (like hand
sanitizer and an additional (back up) mask) and things to do when you return home (like washing hands immediately and washing masks).

- **Talk** to your child about precautions to take at school. Children may be advised to:
  - Wash and sanitize their hands more often.
  - Keep physical distance from other students.
  - Wear a mask.
  - Avoid sharing objects with other students, including water bottles, devices, writing instruments, and books.
  - Use hand sanitizer (that contains at least 60% alcohol.) Make sure you’re using a safe product. FDA recalled products that contain toxic methanol. Monitor how they feel and tell an adult if they are not feeling well.

- Develop a plan as a family to protect household members who are at increased risk for severe illness.
- Make sure your information is current at school, including emergency contacts and individuals authorized to pick up your child(ren) from school. If that list includes anyone who is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, consider identifying an alternate person.
- Be familiar with your school’s plan for how they will communicate with families when a positive case or exposure to someone with COVID-19 is identified and ensure student privacy is upheld.
- Plan for possible school closures or periods of quarantine. If transmission is increasing in your community or if multiple children or staff test positive for COVID-19, the school building might close. Similarly, if a close contact of your child (within or outside of school) tests positive for COVID-19, your child may need to stay home for a 2-week quarantine period. You may need to consider the feasibility of teleworking, taking leave from work, or identifying someone who can supervise your child in the event of school building closures or quarantine.
- Plan for transportation:
  - If your child rides a bus, plan for your child to wear a mask on the bus and talk to your child about the importance of following bus rules and any spaced seating rules.
  - If carpooling, plan on every child in the carpool and the driver wearing masks for the entire trip. If your school uses the cohort model, consider finding families within your child’s group/cohort at school to be part of the carpool.

- If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan or receives other learning support (e.g., tutoring), ask your school how these services will continue.
- If your child receives speech, occupational or physical therapy or other related services from the school, ask your school how these services will continue.
- If your child receives mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), ask your school how these services will continue.
- If your school uses a cohorting model, consider limiting your child’s in-person out-of-school interactions to children in the same cohort or to activities where physical distancing can be maintained.
- Reinforce the concept of physical distancing with your child.
- Talk to your school administrators and teachers about their plans for physical education and physical activity (e.g., recess).
  - **Safer options include being outdoors when possible, reducing the number of people in an indoor space, and encouraging students to stay at least 6 ft apart.**

- Ask how your school plans to help ensure that students are following practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
If your school is requiring or encouraging the use of masks, think about the following actions. Consider asking what steps your school will take to minimize the potential for students to be singled out or teased for wearing or not wearing a mask. Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some children. Wearing masks should be a priority when it is difficult for students to stay 6 feet apart from each other (e.g., during carpool drop off or pick up, when entering the building or standing in line at school, or while on the bus).

Masks should not be worn by:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

Actions to take and points to consider

- Have multiple masks, so you can wash them daily and have back-ups ready. Choose masks that
  - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
  - Completely cover the nose and mouth
  - Are secured with ties or ear loops
  - Include multiple layers of fabric
  - Allow for breathing without restriction
  - Can be washed and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- Label your child's masks clearly in a permanent marker so that they are not confused with those of other children.
- Practice with your child putting on and taking off masks without touching the cloth.
- Explain the importance of wearing a mask and how it protects other people from getting sick.
- Consider talking to your child about other people who may not be able to wear masks for medical reasons (e.g., asthma).
- As a family, model wearing masks, especially when you are in situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain or impossible.
- If you have a young child, help build their comfort wearing a mask and become comfortable seeing others in masks.
  - Praise your child for wearing a mask correctly.
  - Put a mask on stuffed animals.
  - Draw a mask on a favorite book character.
  - Show images of other children wearing masks.
  - Allow your child to choose their mask that meets any dress requirements your school may have.
  - Suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Consider providing your child with a container (e.g., labeled resealable bag) to bring to school to store their masks when not wearing it (e.g., when eating)
Since the school experience will be very different from before with desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, and the possibility of staying in the classroom for lunch, it is unlike anything your child is used to. Before school is in session, you may want to talk to your child and explain that all these steps are being taken to keep everyone safe and healthy. The list below provides actions and considerations regarding your child's mental health and emotional well-being as they transition back to in-person school. CDC's Stress and Coping During the COVID-19 Pandemic provides additional resources for you and your family. In addition, if your child seems to need mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), you may want to ask your school administrator for more information on these services.

**Actions to take and points to consider**

- Talk with your child about how school will look different (e.g., desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, possibility of staying in the classroom for lunch).
- Talk with your child about how school is going and about interactions with classmates and teachers. Find out how your child is feeling and communicate that what they may be feeling is normal.
- Anticipate behavior changes in your child. Watch for changes like excessive crying or irritation, excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, difficulty concentrating, which may be signs of your child struggling with stress and anxiety.
- Try to attend school activities and meetings. Schools may offer more of these virtually. As a parent, staying informed and connected may reduce your feelings of anxiety and provide a way for you to express any concerns you may have about your child's school.
- Ask your school about any plans to reduce potential stigma related to having or being suspected of having COVID-19.
- Check if your school has any systems in place to identify and provide mental health services to students in need of support. If so, identify a point of contact for these services at your school.
  - Name of school point person
  - Contact information
- Check if your school has a plan to help students adjust to being back in school. Students might need help adjusting to how COVID-19 has disrupted their daily life. Support may include school counseling and psychological services (including grief counseling), social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs and curricula, and peer/social support groups.
- Check if your school will provide training for students in mindfulness, incorporating SEL into classroom curriculum (either virtually or in-person), or support a child's ability to cope with stress and anxiety. If not, consider asking about ways to add this to your child's at-home learning.
- You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:
  - Take breaks
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Exercise
  - Eat well
  - Stay socially connected
Planning for virtual or at-home learning

Virtual learning may be a choice or part of a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan for some children and families, and it may be necessary if your child has certain underlying health conditions or is immunocompromised. In a hybrid model, learning may occur virtually during part of the week and occur in-person for the rest. Or, the school year may start with virtual learning but switch to in-person learning for the remainder or certain times of the school year. Going back to school virtually may pose additional challenges with staying connected to peers, since students may have less frequent or no in-person interactions to each other. You may want to talk to school staff to learn more about what they are doing to support connection among students, interactive learning with feedback, building resilience, and social-emotional wellbeing for students who will not be onsite. In addition, if your child receives speech, occupational, or physical therapy or other related services from the school, ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning. Likewise, if your child receives mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.

Virtual or At-Home Learning Checklist (PDF version)

Interactive and downloadable PDF

Checklist with editable fields for making notes

- Download
- Edit and save
- Print

You can also see a non-PDF version of the checklist below.

Virtual or At-Home Learning Checklist (web version)
Actions to take and points to consider

- Try to attend school activities and meetings. Schools may offer more of these virtually. These meetings can be a way to express any concerns you may have about the school's plans.

- Create a schedule with your child and make a commitment to stick with it. Structure and routine can greatly help your child from falling behind with assignments. Discuss your family's schedule and identify the best times for learning and instruction, as well as family-oriented physical activity, such as walks outside. A family calendar or other visuals could be useful for keeping track of deadlines and assignments.

- Try to find a space where you live that's free of distractions, noise, and clutter for learning and doing homework. This could be a quiet, well-lit place in your dining room or living room or a corner of your home that could fit a small table, if available.

- Identify opportunities for your child to connect with peers and be social—either virtually or in person, while maintaining physical distance.
Here are some things to look for when reviewing your school’s plan for virtual or at-home learning. Some of these action items and points to consider might warrant additional conversations with your school administrators or healthcare provider.

**Actions to take and points to consider**

- Find out if there will be regular and consistent opportunities during each day for staff and student check-ins and peer-to-peer learning.
- Find out if students have regular opportunities for live video instruction by teachers or if they will primarily be watching pre-recorded videos and receive accompanying assignments.
- Ask if the school will offer virtual or socially distanced physical activity. If not, identify ways to add physical activity to your child’s daily routine.
- Ask your school what steps they are taking to help students adjust to being back in school and to the ways that COVID-19 may have disrupted their daily life. Supports may include school counseling and psychological services, social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs, and peer/social support groups.
- If your child participates in school meal programs, identify how your school district plans to make meals available to students who are learning virtually at home.
- If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan or receives other learning support (e.g., tutoring), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.
- If your child receives speech, occupational or physical therapy or other related services from the school, ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.
- If your child receives mental health or behavioral services (e.g., social skills training, counseling), ask your school how these services will continue during virtual at-home learning.
- If you anticipate having technological barriers to learning from home, ask if your school or community can provide support or assistance for students without appropriate electronic devices for schoolwork (like a computer/laptop or tablet).
- If your school offers a hybrid model, be familiar with your school’s plan for how they will communicate with families when a positive case or exposure to someone with COVID-19 is identified and ensure student privacy is upheld.
Since the school experience will be very different from before with desks far apart from each other, teachers maintaining physical distance, and the possibility of staying in the classroom for lunch, it is unlike anything your child is used to. Before school is in session, you may want to talk to your child and explain that all these steps are being taken to keep everyone safe and healthy. The list below provides actions and considerations regarding your child's mental health and social-emotional wellbeing, as they transition to virtual or at-home learning.

CDC's Stress and Coping During the COVID-19 Pandemic provides some additional resources for you and your family.

**Actions to take and points to consider**

- Watch for and anticipate behavior changes in your child (e.g., excessive crying or irritation, excessive worry or sadness, unhealthy eating or sleeping habits, difficulty concentrating), which may be signs of your child struggling with stress and anxiety.
- Talk with your child about how school is going and about interactions with classmates and teachers. Find out how your child is feeling and communicate that what they may be feeling is normal.
- Ask your school about any plans to reduce potential stigma related to having or being suspected of having COVID-19.
- Ask your school about any plans to support school connectedness to ensure that students do not become socially isolated during extended periods of virtual/at-home learning.
- Check if your school has any systems in place to identify and provide mental health services to students in need support. If so, identify the point of contact for these services at your school.
  - Name of school point person
  - Contact information
- Check if school has a plan to help students adjust to virtual/at-home learning and more broadly, to the ways COVID-19 may have disrupted their daily life. Supports may include school counseling and psychological services, social-emotional learning (SEL)-focused programs and curricula, and peer/social support groups.
- Identify opportunities for your child to be physically active during virtual/at-home learning.
- Check if your school will provide virtual/at-home training for students in mindfulness, incorporating SEL into classroom curriculum, or stress and coping supports for your child.
- You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:
  - Take breaks
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Exercise
  - Eat well
  - Stay socially connected

**Download the checklist:** Planning for Virtual or At-Home Learning [3 pages]

Alternate languages: Spanish | Creole
Resources to navigate stress and uncertainty

Below are governmental and non-governmental resources that can help parents, guardians, and caregivers navigate stress and uncertainty and to build resilience for you and your children heading into the school year.

- CDC Stress and Coping During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- CDC Parent Portal
- CDC Children's Mental Health
- Bullying Prevention Resources
- Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs in Emergencies

Non-government resources

Exit notification/disclaimer policy

Links with this icon (external icon) indicate that you are leaving a CDC Web site. The link may lead to a non-federal site, but it provides additional information that is consistent with the intended purpose of a federal site. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) cannot attest to the accuracy of a non-federal site. Linking to a non-federal site does not constitute an endorsement by HHS or any of its employees of the sponsors or the information and products presented on the site. You will be subject to the destination site's privacy policy when you follow the link.

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SEL Resources and Guidelines for Educators, Parents, and Caregivers
- Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools Resources for Schools and Families Impacted by COVID-19
- Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network)