



# Is your child experiencing back-to-school anxiety?

**For many children and families, the thought of returning back to school during a pandemic can create anxiety.**

There are unprecedented challenges that families are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents must make difficult decisions on whether to enroll their children in virtual school or send them back to campus school. Children who are beginning virtual school for the first time will have unique challenges such as adjusting to a new method of learning, having less structured days and coping with decreased social interaction.

## **How can parents reduce anxiety for children starting virtual school?**

**Develop a clear daily schedule.** Structure and clear expectations are vital for children to learn and stay engaged. Consider posting a daily agenda with to-do items and measurements of success. This will help your child feel prepared and more in control.

**Consider setting up designated learning stations at home.** This will help your child focus. By creating a designated learning area, your child can detach from the distractions of regular home life such as television, games or iPads. This will also help to give your child their own space similar to how their desk would function in school.

**Help your child stay connected to their friends.** Social interaction is important for children. Consider setting up video calls for your child to interact with friends. If you feel comfortable, you could consider scheduling outdoor activities where social distancing can be practiced.

**Ask your child how he/she is feeling.** It is important to reassure children that it is healthy to talk about their emotions and worries. It is important for parents to help them manage their feelings and teach communication skills. If your child is struggling emotionally, listen to their concerns.

**Start getting your child on his/her school sleep schedule.** Sleep is extremely important for physical and cognitive growth in children. It is a good idea to start transitioning your child back to a school sleep schedule early so there is less of an adjustment when school starts back.

**Take care of your own mental health.** Children tend to take their emotional cues from key adults in their lives. If you are experiencing anxiety about your child returning back to school, it is important that you address it. Parents should focus on healthy coping mechanisms and their own mental well-being as an example to their children. We are all in this together!

**If you or your child are experiencing anxiety and need emotional support, you can receive FREE 24-Hour Emotional Support through Peace River Center's Crisis Line (863)519-3744 or Toll Free at (800)627-5906.**