



SAKEENAH
CANADA

Back to school

**HELPING YOUR CHILD FEEL
READY, CONFIDENT &
CONNECTED**





A new school year can bring excitement, but it can also bring nerves and uncertainty. A new teacher, school, classroom, schedule, or group of friends can feel like a lot for children to manage.

Here are a few simple ways you can help your child start the school year feeling prepared and supported.

1. GET BACK INTO A ROUTINE

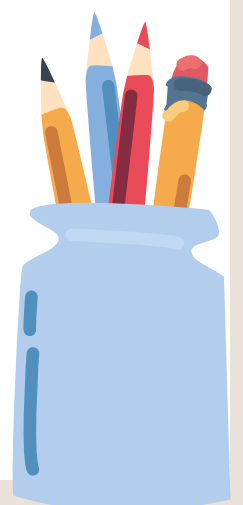
A predictable routine can make mornings and bedtime easier.

Try to:

- Adjust bedtime and wake-up times before school starts
- Prepare clothes, backpacks, and lunches the night before (this little habit can save so much time and stress in the morning!)
- Keep mornings calm and predictable whenever possible
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for parts of their routine

Try creating a “Morning Checklist” with your child:

- ☐ Brush teeth
- ☐ Get dressed
- ☐ Eat breakfast
- ☐ Pack lunch
- ☐ Fill water bottle
- ☐ Check backpack
- ☐ Put on shoes





2. TALK ABOUT FEELINGS, WITHOUT MAKING IT A BIG INTERVIEW

We often ask our children, “How was school?” because we genuinely want to know about their day. But for some children, that question can feel too broad or overwhelming. After a long day, they may not know where to start or they may simply say, “Good,” “Fine,” or “I don't know.”

Instead of asking them to summarize their entire day, try asking one simple, specific question at a time.

Here are some suggestions:

“What was the best part of your day?”

“What made you laugh today?”

“Who did you talk to today?”

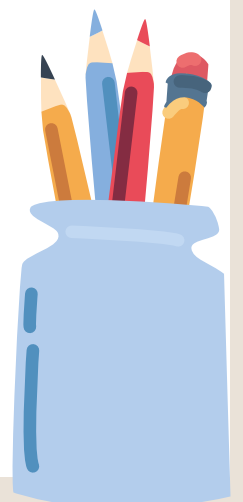
“Was anything difficult today?”

“Is there anything you're nervous about?”

“What is something you did today that you're proud of?”

“Is there anything you want help with?”

Sometimes the best conversations happen when we're not trying too hard to have a conversation. A car ride, a walk, or a bedtime routine can create the perfect opportunity for your child to open up.





3. NEW SCHOOL, NEW FRIENDS

Remind your child that they don't have to figure everything out on the first day, or even the first week.

Encourage them to:

- Say hello to their teacher.
- Introduce themselves to someone new.
- Ask questions when they need help.
- Join activities they enjoy.
- Talk to a trusted adult if they're having a difficult time.

Talk about kindness with them. Ask casually: "If you saw someone sitting alone at school, what could you do?" This can open a conversation about kindness, inclusion, and making friends.

4. BUILD INDEPENDENCE

A new school year is a great opportunity to practice everyday skills.

Depending on their age, encourage your child to:

- ☐ Pack their own backpack
- ☐ Organize their school supplies
- ☐ Keep track of their belongings
- ☐ Follow their morning routine
- ☐ Prepare a simple snack
- ☐ Ask a teacher for help
- ☐ Try solving small problems before asking an adult

Remember that independence doesn't mean doing everything alone. It means learning to try, problem-solve, and ask for help when needed.





5. HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL PREPARED WITH A QUICK BACK-TO-SCHOOL CHECK

Before the First Day:

- ☐ Backpack and school supplies are ready
- ☐ School route is familiar
- ☐ Lunch and snacks are planned
- ☐ Water bottle is ready
- ☐ Bedtime routine is in place
- ☐ Morning routine has been practiced
- ☐ Important contacts are saved
- ☐ Child knows who they can ask for help
- ☐ Child has had a chance to talk about their feelings

6. IF YOUR CHILD IS STRUGGLING

It's normal for any child to take time to adjust. Pay attention if concerns continue or become more intense.

You may notice:

- Frequent complaints about school
- Ongoing trouble sleeping
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches
- Strong worries about going to school
- Becoming unusually withdrawn or upset
- Significant changes in mood or behaviour

If you're concerned, talk with your child and consider connecting with their teacher, school support staff, or another trusted professional. Most importantly, remind your child: "You don't have to figure everything out by yourself. I'm here to help."

The beginning of a school year is more than getting children ready with supplies and schedules. It's an opportunity to help them build confidence, independence, resilience, and healthy routines.

Your child may not have a perfect first day, first week, or even first month, and that's okay. Give them time, listen to their concerns, celebrate their progress, and remind them that they don't have to navigate new challenges alone.

Wishing your family a confident and positive start to the new school year!

-Sakeenah Canada