

'Top Tips' to help prepare your child for coming back to School

1. Ask your child how they are feeling about coming back to school – they may have a range of feelings and it is good to encourage them to think of more than one. Their feelings may change from excited one minute to feelings of anxiety, unsureness the next. This is perfectly normal when anticipating something. Their worry or anxiety is their brain and body being protective – we just need to make sure that it is not being too protective!
2. Spend some time acknowledging these feelings even if they say that they are worried – it feels counter intuitive to stay with uncomfortable feelings because we, as parents/carers, are programmed to try and solve our children's problems and take away their worries. However, 'sitting' with uncomfortable feelings for a time, with your child, shows them that you are validating those feelings and this is helpful in itself. Sometimes just naming feelings makes them shrink a little or a lot – 'Name it to Tame it!'
3. Sort worries into 'those we can do something about' and 'those that are out of our control'. The ones that are out of our control need to be written down either in a book that you physically close in front of your child and take away with you saying that you are taking those worries away to look after for now or do the same on a piece of paper that you seal in an envelope to take away and look after.
4. With the worries you can tackle make a plan of things you can do – the act of doing something often helps to reduce feelings of worry especially if you do them with someone else. So have a go at:
 - Sharing the 'story' booklet from school called 'Stay-at-Home Superheroes are and Coming Back to School' and use the suggestions in there.
 - Practicing getting up and having breakfast on time.
 - Encourage them to find their Book Bag, Water Bottle, etc.
 - Choosing a favourite home snack for next week or plan a favourite breakfast.
 - Plan a fun or favourite activity to do together at home after school on Monday and each day next week – it doesn't have to be anything big, playing their favourite board game, doing a jigsaw together.
 - Make a countdown chart so they can cross off the days – however make it go through to the weekend so that they don't feel home ends and school starts we want them to know that they have home and school and the two link together.
 - Take a walk to school.
 - Encourage independence – practice putting on their coat, shoes, etc.
 - Talk about all the things they are looking forward to doing again at school.
5. Talk about being a 'Green Mouse'; having a go even when you don't feel brave and don't feel like a challenge. Remember our Golden Value of 'We are Courageous!' Bravery is like a muscle, the more you exercise it the stronger it gets and often things aren't as difficult as we think they might be once we start them.