

MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER)

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
AUGUST 2022 MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT

The school year is approaching which can be a very stressful time for children and adults. In this month's MH TidBIT, we want to provide you some tips for back to school to help lessen anxiety for the new school year.

Model calm- Showing your child you are calm and confident while getting them ready for school will help them stay calm and confident.

Get into a routine- Although summer can be a very fun and positive time, it can also be disruptive for children as they quickly get away from their school routine. Although they may resist, it is important to get children back into the school routine, even if it is just a few days before school starts. Have your child return to an appropriate bed and wake up time that would mirror the bed and wake up times they would be expected to have when they return to school. Additionally, you should assist them in performing a normal school wake up and evening routine. For example: shower, get dressed, breakfast, etc. Taking these steps should make for an easier transition when school starts.

Have a trial run- This can be helpful for children who deal with anxiety related to school, especially children who refuse to go to school. A few days before school starts, driving to the building, walking in the building, mapping out where classes are located, etc. are some activities that can aid in lessening the nervousness about the first day. Contact your child's school for assistance with this if needed.

Talk about changing friendships- Your child may need to make new friends each school year and letting your child know of this possibility can help with this transition. Another important discussion to have with your children is how to share friends. Remember that not all problems need fixed, and children may just need their parents to validate their feelings by saying "I know it is hard."

Help children manage their time- The beginning of the school year can often be a slower, more relaxed time when it comes to workload; however, it can be easy to let responsibilities snowball. Making sure your child manages their time and does not fall behind is important so setting aside a specific time to work on schoolwork in the evening may be helpful. Also being mindful that your child is not overwhelmed with their combined workload and extracurriculars is important.

Do not be afraid of setbacks- Your child may have a good first few weeks of school, but then struggle a few days. This is normal as every child experience ups and downs. As long as the down period is not extended, there is likely nothing to be worried about. Accepting that your child may have setbacks will not only help you, but also help you child gain confidence in the long run. If the problem seems to be going on for a couple of weeks, it may be time to reach out to your child's school to discuss the issue further