

Community Institute for Psychotherapy

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2021-2022 News & Notes



August 2021 News and Notes Making the Transition Back to School By Robin Joy Berenson, PhD, LMFT

The Marin County Office of Education has announced that all Marin schools will offer in-person classes beginning this month. Much as all of us hoped that it would be otherwise, the situation with the coronavirus and public safety risks and precautions continues to shift. Here are some suggestions as to how to navigate the weeks ahead as you and your family anticipate children's return to the classroom.

Identify the questions and concerns you and family members may have about the return to school. Talk openly about the challenges this year presents and let children express thoughts and ask questions. Acknowledging emotions such as anxiety and fear helps to defuse them, and allows you to address them.

Seek out the information you need. Consult reliable, up-to-date sources: Marin County Health and Human Services at <http://www.marinhhs.org> ; and the Marin County Office of Education website, at <https://www.marinschools.org/>.

The websites of individual school districts similarly have information you might find useful. Here are a few: Northern Unified School District <https://www.nusd.org>; San Rafael City Schools <http://www.srcs.org>; Tamalpais School District <https://www.tamdistrict.org>; Lagunitas School District <https://www.lagunitas.org>.

As we have seen, however, new developments can alter recommended and even required protocols. Stay up-to-date and remain flexible as conditions continue to change.

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Begin school-year routines early, a couple of weeks in advance. As with any school year, the change from summer to school schedules can take time to establish. Begin early so that a comfortable pattern is already in place before the first day. Regular mealtimes and bedtimes are especially important and will help assure that your children have adequate nutrition and rest.

Juggling diverse schedules can be challenging, especially for working parents whose schedules may not sync with the school day. Make any arrangements for transportation and childcare in advance of the beginning of the school year. Be sure your child knows what to expect.

Make an extra effort to make yourself available to listen and share. Especially now, be sure to check in with what's going on with your children. Engage them in conversations about school, friends, what interests and activities they enjoy. Encourage them to pursue areas of interest, such as music, art, or sports. Listen for possible problems or concerns, such as bullying or social isolation.

Recognize that this transition back to school may be difficult for children and offer your reassurance when needed, perhaps spending extra time reading books together, playing games, or sharing a movie. Some regression in behavior may occur in the short-term, and that can be perfectly normal.

If you have concerns about your child, talk with the child's teacher(s), school counselor, and/or pediatrician. The sooner the situation can be understood and potential problems identified, the more easily and quickly they can be resolved.

CIP offers several "Checklists for Health" on our website at <http://cipmarin.org/> under "Education and Prevention."