

Learning About Adjusting to School



What issues do children deal with at school?

When children go to school, they leave the safety of their home and family. They learn crucial skills—like how to make friends—that they can use for the rest of their lives. School is a testing ground where children evaluate, accept, and reject each other daily.

Every day, children face new challenges at school. The fear of the unknown can be scary for some kids. So can worries about homework and awkward social situations.

Other challenges may include:

- Bullying. This can lead to serious problems for your child. It can interfere with social and emotional development and school performance.
- Time management problems. Some kids need help adjusting to more complex subjects and increased homework.
- Poor grades.
- Performance anxiety. Some kids get very anxious about every assignment, quiz, paper, and test.

How can you help your child adjust to school?

You can help your child adjust to school. Listen to your child's concerns and offer support. For example, you may create a map of classrooms before school starts. This may help relieve some anxiety.

- Time management: Help your child set short- and long-term goals. Teach your child to do the most important tasks first. Get a calendar or date book and show your child how to list responsibilities, such as homework and after-school sports.
- Grades: Stress that a good education requires hard work but that the effort is well worth it. Help your child reach their goals. Reward success.
- Performance anxiety: Praise your child's efforts as long as your child works hard, studies often, and is doing their best.

Self-esteem and social skills

Work on ways to strengthen your child's self-esteem. For example, encourage your child's interests and support your child even in failures. Try these ideas:

- Help your child learn how to make and keep friends.
- Help your child recognize and grow their talents.
- Talk about all the successes your child has had. Examples include doing well on a test, learning new spelling words, or making an impressive art project.
- Keep a friendly and supportive relationship with your child's teachers to help build your child's confidence.

Your child can learn social skills that can be used at school. Teach your child to:

- Let other people know that your child appreciates them.
- Avoid gossip and put-downs.
- Seek wise people as advisors and friends.
- Not let a disagreement hurt a friendship.

You can help your kids learn to make good choices. To help them deal with peer pressure, teach them to say "no," choose their friends wisely, and build good self-esteem.

How can your child deal with bullying?

Here are some tips to help your child.

- Talk with your child about bullying if you feel it's a problem. Seek help from your child's teacher, principal, or school counselor.
- Help your child come up with strategies to deal with a bully. Your child can walk away or look the bully in the eye and say, "Leave me alone."
- Encourage your child to take part in after-school activities such as sports or drama. These can raise a child's confidence.
- Get support from parents and other adults who are around where the problems occur.
- Help your child deal with cyberbullying.
 - Teach your child not to reply to bullies online and to ignore text messages from bullies. Ask your child to show an adult the message. Block any more messages from the sender.
 - Remind your child to accept messages only from people your child knows.

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