

Helping Your Child Prepare for Hybrid: Tips for Parents/Guardians

Re-establish predictable bedtime and mealtime routines - Routines help children to feel more secure. Make sure that your child has plenty of time to get ready for school. Allow for extra time in the morning, as rushing can create more stress. Consider creating a goodbye routine, especially if your child's dropoff routine will be different. Keep in mind that school start times will shift when hybrid learning begins. Review the hybrid schedule that is specific to your child's school.

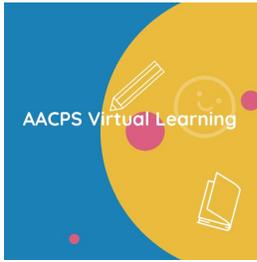
Talk with your child about what to expect - Discuss how school might look different in the hybrid model (classroom setup, teacher/peer interactions, recess). Review current safety protocols, such as mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing.

- <https://www.aacps.org/safetyprotocols>

Make sure your child has their supplies for hybrid. Consider making a checklist of materials that they will need to take to school each day.

Practice separating - Young children in particular may experience separation anxiety or shyness at first. Try not to linger when you drop your child off. Reassure them that you love them, will think of them during the day, and will be back. Consider sending a transitional object (like a picture or small reminder) that will help your child feel connected when you are apart.

Help your child emotionally prepare for a return to school - Talk openly with your child about returning to school. Adjust the conversation according to your child's age and maturity level. You can help your child to feel more comfortable by openly discussing their worries, answering their questions, and letting them know that it is OK to feel worried. Allow your child to make choices (e.g., what to wear, what to pick for lunch) that will help them feel in control.



Focus on the positives - Parents set the tone, so try to model calmness and optimism for your child. Reassure them that it is natural to be nervous, but they will feel comfortable once they are familiar with the new routines. Emphasize positives like being able to see their friends and teacher. Ask your child, “What are you looking forward to at school?” or “What have you missed about school?” Check in with your child about what is going well once they start school.

Encourage flexibility - Let your child know ahead of time that teachers, classmates and schedules may change. Communicate that schools or classrooms might need to quarantine, so your child can be prepared for changes that may occur.

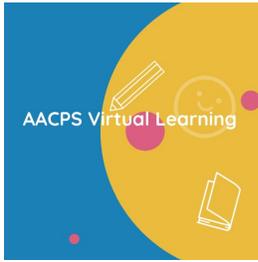
Be ready for behavior changes - Many children may display some difficulties with separation from parents, some shyness or worry about schedules, schoolwork or friends. This is normal during the back-to-school transition. Continue to monitor and communicate with the school, as ongoing withdrawal or worries may signal a problem. Reach out to your school counselor or if you are concerned about your child.

Stay informed and connected - Monitor communication from your child’s school closely to stay up to date. Check in with your child’s teacher to know how your child is coping with the transition back to school and how you can best support your child at home.

References

<https://www.athletico.com/2020/09/09/tackling-the-transition-back-to-school-guide-for-parents-students/>

<https://childmind.org/article/back-to-school-anxiety-during-covid/>



<https://www.emersonhospital.org/articles/back-to-school-during-covid>

Family Tip Sheet (updated 2/12/21)