



## Handling Stress During Back-to-School Time

It's back-to-school time for the 2022-2023 school year. Most schools have been back in-person for 2021-2022, but it has still been a challenging year for kids, parents, teachers, and school personnel. COVID-19 has continued to complicate school engagements since we are still talking about social distancing, masking, COVID-19 positive exposures, and health policies.

In addition to continued pandemic responses, we have also experienced high teacher turnover, increased number of school shootings, and higher levels of parent-teacher conflict. As summer wraps up and the new school year quickly approaches, many children and families are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety, anticipation, and concern. This is normal, and there are some good behavioral practices that can help.

Below are some strategies to help your family ease back into the school routine:

**Calm yourself.** Working through your own feelings will make it easier for you to support and reassure your child.

**Validation.** Let your child know that their nervous or apprehensive feelings about returning to school are normal.

**Reinforce good sleep habits.** Plenty of rest and sleep are important for preventing depression and other mental health issues.

**Be available.** Make connecting part of your routine. Walking, driving home together or having uninterrupted dinners are useful to bond and communicate.

**Serve healthy food and encourage healthy eating.** Food choices affect mood, concentration, and energy. Serve nutritious foods including vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

**Encourage regular exercise.** Physical activity is great for mental wellness and has been shown to enhance coping skills and decrease depression and anxiety.

If you feel like you and/or your child need help adopting these strategies or would benefit from some added support right now, contact Uprise Health to discuss how your EAP program can help. And reach out to your primary care doctor for specific health needs.

### Summer isn't over yet!

Although we can start prepping for the school year now, we shouldn't say goodbye to smart summer practices. Keep up the following practices for a happy and healthy summer:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Wear sunscreen and insect repellent.
- Be aware and avoid extreme heat.
- Manage your mental health with self-care and some time off.