



Mental Health America of Franklin County

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Back to School: Is Your Child Totally Ready?

Preparing children for a new school year typically involves buying new clothes, replacing last year's backpack, and stocking up on new school equipment. Often overlooked is a check-up on our children's feelings and outlook about returning to school.

Many children experience some anxiety at starting a new school year. Let your children know that this is normal and everyone experiences it. Encourage them to talk about their particular concerns and express their emotions. Although they are young, their fears and worries are as real and powerful as adults'. But, unlike adults, they have less experience dealing with their feelings. Their fears can be harmful if not addressed by the adults in their life.

The good news is there are many things you can do to help relieve your children's anxieties and promote positive feelings about going back to school. Studies show that your involvement can contribute more to your child's success than your income or education. So it pays for you to take time to listen to your children and support them as they begin a new school year!

Here are some tips on how to get started:

- Take time to talk to your children about going back to school. Get them to express their emotions and feelings and share some of your own.
- Let your child know that you think school is important.
- Continue your talks as the school year unfolds. With the door to discussion wide open, your child will feel comfortable coming to you for guidance as tough issues arise in their life.
- Show interest in school activities and attend events that your child is in.
- Attend parent meetings and be respectful of your child's teachers and other school personnel. Your model of how to behave with these people will help your child set his/her own behavior standards at school.
- Provide unconditional love and support to your child.
- Celebrate your child's accomplishments. Encourage their talents. Accept their limitations.
- Set a regular time for your child's waking-up, homework, chores, dinner and bedtime. Studies show that successful students have parents who keep a daily routine going in the household.
- To simplify mornings, help your child select what to wear to school on the night before.
- To help your child stay attentive in school, make sure they have a healthy breakfast everyday.
- A good breakfast will usually keep them from away from the less nutritious food in school vending machines

Mental Health America of Franklin County is a private, not-for-profit organization, established in 1956. We help people navigate the mental health system. We are dedicated to promoting mental health in Franklin County through advocacy, education, and support services. Our programs include: information and referral to community mental health and alcohol/drug services; free support groups for people with mental illness and their families; an Ombudsman program that assists clients in navigating the mental health and alcohol/drug system; mental health screenings in English and Spanish; Pro Bono Counseling Program where underinsured and uninsured individuals can receive free counseling; community and professional mental health education including Get Connected; maternal mental health support and advocacy (POEM); and a quarterly newsletter featuring legislative updates and new happenings at MHAFC. We receive funding from the Franklin County ADAMH Board, United Way of Central Ohio, individuals, foundations, and corporations. To become a member or find out more information, please visit us online at www.mhafc.org.