

# Navigating Change



## 6 Ways Caregivers Can Support School Transitions

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# Is the school year bringing changes for your student?

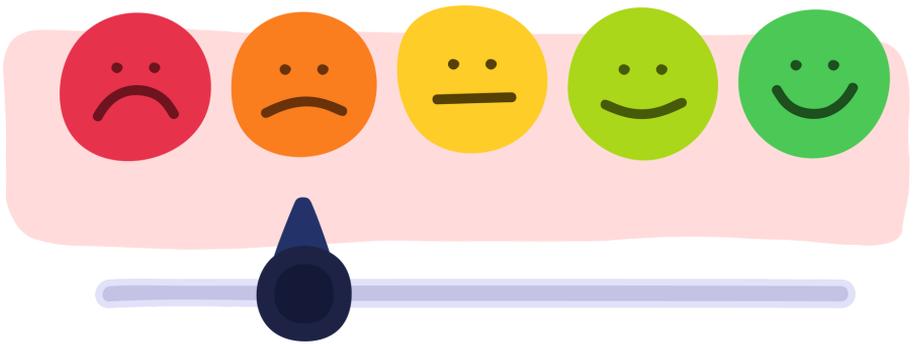


Starting at a new school, having a new teacher, or leveling up or down a grade can bring on many different emotions for kids. We know how important it is to support kids' emotional well-being during such big changes.

So, to make transitions smoother, we're sharing some tried-and-true strategies and tips for adults to boost kids' confidence and resilience as they embark on a new experience.

# 1. Acknowledge their feelings

Start by acknowledging and validating kids' feelings about the transition. It's normal for children to feel a mix of excitement, nervousness, and uncertainty. Encourage open conversations about their thoughts and emotions, and reassure them that feeling a range of emotions is okay.



Ask kids a few questions to get the conversation going: **What are you most nervous about?** **What's the best thing that could happen?** **What are you most excited about?** Dig a bit deeper into their responses. For example, if they share what they are most nervous about, come up with a plan on how they might handle those feelings.



## 2. Talk about what to expect

Discuss what a typical day might look like for your student: Academic time, lunch, recess, and specials like art and music are all part of a schedule they are likely to follow. Reducing uncertainty helps kids stay calm, cool, and collected.



Reassure them that it's natural to feel some fear and anxiety about new situations, but you, along with the teachers and staff, will guide and support them every step of the way.

# 3. Encourage positive self-talk

Teaching kids positive self-talk and coping strategies can help manage their stress or anxiety. Encourage them to focus on their strengths, remind them of past successes, and stay optimistic about making new friends and learning new things.



Examples of positive self-talk:

"I can do this."

"I am capable and strong."

"Mistakes help me learn and grow."

"I am proud of myself."

"I can ask for help if I need it."

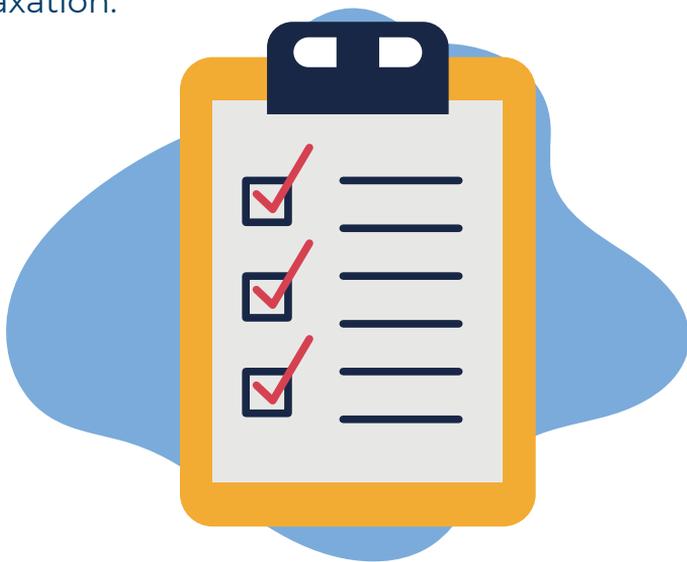
"I am a good friend."

"I can handle challenges."

"I am worthy of love and respect."

## 4. Establish routines

Establishing consistent routines at home can provide stability and a sense of security. Try creating a structured morning routine for getting ready for school, planning regular family meals, and setting aside time for homework and relaxation.



Guide kids through the specifics of their new school routine, even if they're hesitant. This practice can be comforting and reassuring.

## 5. New school? Plan a visit.

Arrange a visit to a new school before the official start date to familiarize yourself and your child with the environment, classrooms, and key locations such as the cafeteria and playground. If you can't arrange a visit, just driving by, looking at where the drop off location is, or having them walk the sidewalk or to the front door can help them feel comfortable.



Meeting teachers and staff in advance can also ease anxiety and build a sense of connection and familiarity before the big day.

## 6. Celebrate achievements

Celebrate small milestones and achievements during the transition period—whether it's making an introduction by themselves, meeting a new friend, participating in a school activity, or mastering a new skill—try taking time to acknowledge and celebrate kids' efforts and progress.



By implementing these strategies and providing consistent support, you can help kids successfully navigate transitions with confidence!



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