

# COVID-19: HOW WE COME BACK TO SCHOOL MATTERS

Supportive adults can really make a difference for young children.

What do young children need at home and at school/child care?



**Clear, gentle communication** that helps them understand what to expect when they return to school.

- Tell them what will be different, and acknowledge any feelings they express. Talk about what will be the same, and what they will enjoy doing and who they will be happy to see.

● **It's ok to feel your feelings!** 😊 😮 😞 😭 😡

**Consistent access to trusted caregivers who understand** that change is hard, and **can anticipate and welcome** social-emotional and behavior challenges with sensitivity and compassion.

- Your child's response to leaving the comfort of
- being at home to return to school may be to act
- out. Children need to be able to express their
- difficult feelings through their actions without
- consequences, and receive patient guidance
- towards healthy ways to express them.

**"Connect before you correct, regulate, relate, and then reason." ~Bruce Perry**

**A cozy, quiet space** where **they can choose** to be alone to take a break, decompress, and soothe themselves.

- Sometimes the best way to calm down and feel better is to
- not have to interact with anyone. Being able to comfort
- oneself is a healthy coping skill. Provide safe, cozy places
- for children to use when they show you they need some
- space. Encourage quiet activities like reading, and check in
- frequently to ensure safety.



**Opportunities for vigorous play** to move their bodies, release their natural stored up energy.

Go outdoors and play hard, or put on music and dance. Children sense more than they have the skills to express. Moving helps release stored up tension, feelings, and energy.

**Consistency and predictability** in caregivers and routines.

Returning to school means change. Children, however, feel more secure when they can predict what they're going to do and who they will see. As much as you can, keep things the same. For what must be different, tell them ahead of time so they know what to expect.

**Access to comfort items** such as a favorite stuffed animal, blanket, toy, book, or other items that can help ease distress during transitions, separation from caregivers, bed/nap times, conflicts, etc.

Having a safe and cleanable comfort item that can travel between home and school can create a bridge of security. Find out from your child's caregivers if they can make this possible.

**Smooth, unhurried transitions** to and from different activities & routines.

Show children respect by giving them a generous heads-up before they have to stop one routine or activity and move on to something else.