

Psyched Express

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Youth Evaluation & Therapy

Psyched Express is the official newsletter of
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COVID-19:

Back-to-School Anxiety

The COVID-19 pandemic will continue into the new school year and there are many challenges that families are confronting stemming from the isolation and the anxiety of learning at home, even with schools developing new tools for education.

“Isolation can result in higher levels of anxiety or depression, as kids aren’t able to engage with people they care about or in activities they value and enjoy. (Dr. Eric Storch, professor and vice chair of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and vice chair of psychology in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Baylor University.

Without their peers, children’s social skills can suffer. They might forget how to interact with others successfully, creating problems with siblings and family.

A child may act defiant, rebellious, be unusually quiet, pick on siblings, refuse to do his or her work, argue, or resort to hitting or biting. These may be symptoms of underlying stress, anxiety, and a whole host of other issues. Patterns of behavior are worth keeping track of and reporting to a child psychologist, doctor or other professional when seeking help.

The important thing is to get help.



Children who have pre-existing mental health, behavioral issues or learning problems can suffer even more. If your child has struggled with behavioral health problems in the past, engage or reengage them in treatment with a mental health provider. Parents should also reflect calmness in the household to alleviate stress in children.

Children also learn from each other. Peer interaction during classroom activity helps children see how others solve problems, complete assignments, and how to get help from the teacher. These elements of learning will largely be missing in many schools.

Students must also learn a new way of learning, for many a new school subject. Parents feel an anxious about this, especially if they are not used to teaching or technology seems baffling. Problems like scheduling, managing the education of one or more students, enlisting help, balancing work schedules to accommodate the education of their children can make many parents frantic.

12 Tips for Managing

1. Practice social interaction with peers on video chat or other online activities. Practice in role playing social situations.
2. Become familiar with the curriculum, goals for your child's grade.
3. If your child had learning or behavioral issues before, enlist the help of the tutor or therapist.



4. Design a schedule that comfortably fits into a workable pattern so that every day is a known or has basic elements of certainty.
5. If possible and appropriate, allow your child to be part of the decision for his/her schooling.
6. If possible and appropriate, adding a child's peer to your home schooling at least once a week might be encouraging and useful.
7. Have frequent "recess" breaks.
8. Plan outside activities and make sure there is time for hobbies.
9. Allow your child to vent his/her frustration.
10. Make sure your plans include if your school opens for in-class learning later in the year.
11. Parents need to take breaks themselves, so they don't burn out.
12. Build a support network of other parents.

If you have any questions, please call Dr. Katy.

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