

Starting Back to School

Resource Pack



Top tips for preparing your child for school-

This section has a list of things to try and help your child prepare for school, including how to get your child prepared to wear a school uniform again.

School separation anxiety tips

These are some tips to help your child with managing school separation anxiety when school starts again.

Communication passport-

This communication passport can help your child's new teacher understand their individual needs, likes/dislikes and sensory differences to ensure they are supported and understood at school.

Starting School Social Story-

The social story talks about the importance of going back to school and what it might look like. In the spaces provided you can add in a picture of your child's school and their teacher. It also has a section to help them remember what they enjoyed about going to school and to list them.

Weekly Planner-

You can use the weekly planner provided to help your child recognise when school is starting but also to help them see what days they will be in school and what days they will be working from home.

How are you feeling board-

This is an activity to help your child express how they are feeling about going back to school and what they could do to calm down. This could be used alongside the Anxiety Resource Pack found on our website www.autismni.org

Grounding Techniques-

These grounding techniques can encourage children to calm down and manage big emotions such as anxiety and fear by offering distraction,. Grounding exercises also encourage children to focus on what is around them rather than thoughts or feelings that upset them.

Back to School Top Tips



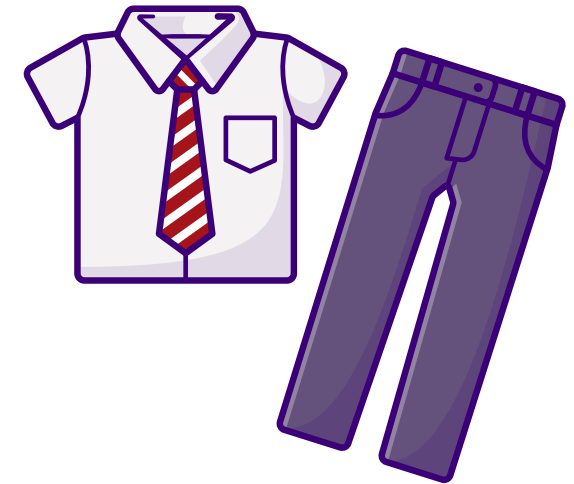
- Once you know school is starting again, it is time to start to talk about it with your child.
- Use a calendar to start the countdown for going back to school.
- Get your child to tick off each day as it passes.
- Start to get your child back into the school routine i.e., going to bed earlier, show uniform that needs to be worn, have a good morning routine.
- Start to drive past the school to help your child get into the way of the school run again.
- On the week of school begins, use a weekly planner to show what day school is starting on, alongside the calendar.
- Have a picture of something your child loves to do under the school picture as a reward for attending school i.e., going to the park, shop for sweets etc.

- Use social stories to explain why it is important to go to school.
- If possible, go onto school website to show who their teacher is going to be.
- Check with school if you can visit it before hand to show your child their classroom and where they will be sitting.
- Remind them of all the fun things they do in school, i.e., see friends, play outside, draw/paint etc.
- Share with the teacher (through phone call or meeting) what your child has been up too and how they got on with the schoolwork at home.
- With your child talk about what they have done while not being in school and that their teacher is excited to hear about it.



Uniform Top Tips

- Discuss with your child what they need to wear to school.
- Ask your child if they can find their uniform.
- Start to have the uniform visible again to your child, i.e., hang it in their bedroom, leave it on a chair for them to see.
- Show pictures to your child of them in their uniform, remind them that they have worn it before.
- Try the uniform on gradually, i.e., socks on one day, then skirt/trousers and socks the next day etc.
- Practise putting the uniform on but also taking it off especially their school jumper, in case they get too warm in the classroom and do not like asking for help.
- Put their name on the uniform to help them know that it belongs to them or alternatively use a favourite sticker to place on uniform, i.e., dinosaur stickers. This could also be used as a motivator to wear the uniform.
- Discuss with your child's school any reasonable adjustments around school uniform to accommodate sensory needs.



Tips for managing school separation anxiety

Use a transitional object.



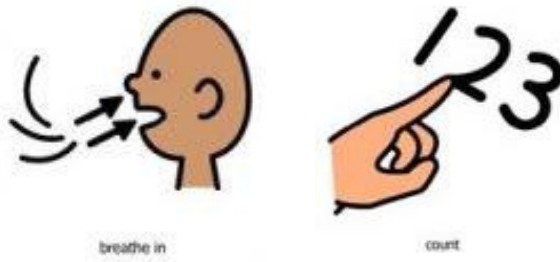
Stick to a routine.



Have a goodbye ritual.



Teach your child calming strategies.



Use visual supports or social stories to help your child prepare for situations that make them feel anxious.



Decide on a goal, then break it down into small steps and work up to bigger challenges.



Model a positive goodbye.



Acknowledge your child's feelings and validate them.



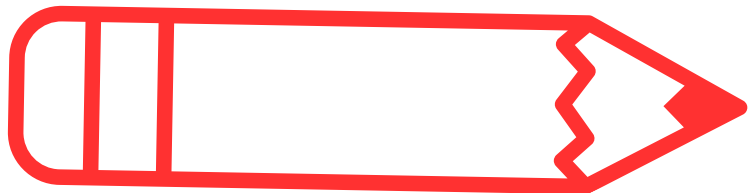
Talk to your child's teacher about their anxiety.



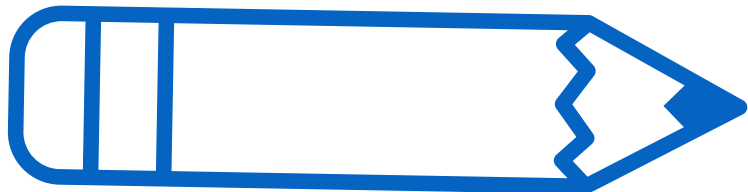
Starting Back to School



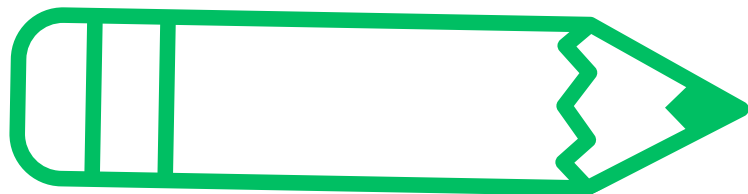
My name is



One thing I like



One thing I don't like



Communication Passport



Communication

I prefer to communicate by

Words

☐

Gestures
(eyes/hands)

☐

Writing things
down

☐

Other

☐

When communicating with me please do
this: _____

Please
don't: _____



taste



touch



smell



see



hear

Things I might find hard

Waiting ____

Taking Turns ____

Working in groups ____

Following instructions ____

Remembering to write work down ____

Working on my own initiative ____

Concentrating ____

How you can help me

Brain Breaks _____

Ask If I need help _____

Prompt me to do next task

Things that might make me stressed or
upset?

You can tell I am upset because I will

These might make me feel better



All boys and girls are going back to school. Summer is over
It is important that children go to school.

I have been off school for 2 months.
It is exciting to go back to school.

My school is called _____

I will go back to school on _____

Like every year I will get a new teacher. My teacher is
called _____

Add in picture of
school

Add in picture of
teacher

I can use my weekly calendar to see when I will start school.

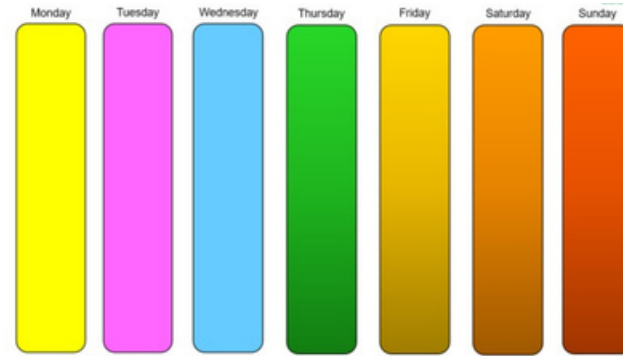


I might feel scared or anxious about starting school again, that is ok. I can speak to a parent or grown up I trust about how I am feeling. I can also use my feelings chart.

I can also use my calm box if I need to calm down. I can ask my teacher if I can bring my calm box to school. Then I can use it when I need too.

Going back to school is exciting. I will get to

- See my teacher again
- Talk about what I did when I was off
- Learn new things
- Do experiments
- Play games
- Play with friends and classmates or alone if I want to





My parent or carer will use a calendar to help me see when I go back to school.

I will use the calendar to countdown, and I will tick off each day as it passes.

It is important that children return to school.

If I don't go to school my friends, teacher and the school community will miss me.



School can help me learn new things which will support me get a job when I am older.

I would like to be _____ when I'm older.

I will try to remember why going to school is important.

I will enjoy going back to school!



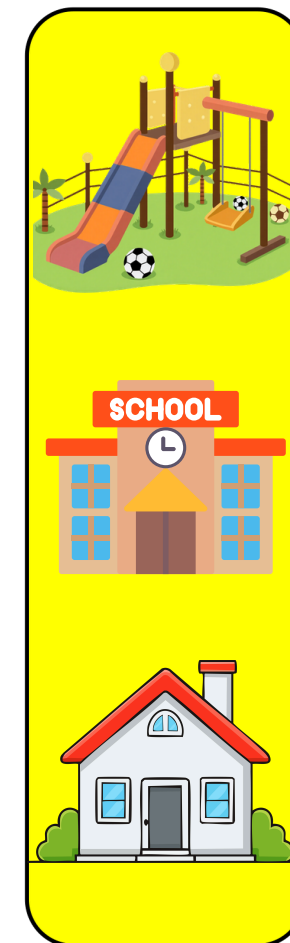
Benefits of using weekly planners / calendars:

- Allows children to be recognise when school is going to start and in how many days
- Helps with organisational skills
- Can help ease anxiety about going back to school
- Allows them to see when they will be in school and when they will be off school again
- Reinforces verbal communication

How to use:

- Mark the day school will start on a calendar
- Encourage the child to countdown the days until school, ticking off on the calendar as each day passes
- On the calendar / weekly planner put a picture of something that motivates the child under the picture of school. i.e. trip to the park, shop for sweets. This will help to encourage going to school in order to get the reward after
- Have a picture of home underneath the school picture on the calendar/weekly planner to allow the child to see that school does not last forever and they will be home again once school has ended
- Weekly planners are used for younger children (primary school age), calendars are usually used for older secondary school children.

Monday



Weekly Planner

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Weekly Planner Pictures

Friends House 	Dentist 	Doctor 	Hospital 	Hair Cut 	Babysitter 	Sleepover 	Home 
Visit Family 	Shops 	Supermarket 	Cinema 	Restaurant 	McDonalds 	Church 	Home 
Treat 	Homework 	Birthday 	Soft play 	Farm 	Holiday 	Drama 	Home 
Park 	Swimming 	Afterschools Club 	Gymnastics 	Sports Club 	Martial Arts 	Music Lesson 	Home 
School 	School 	School 	School 	School 	Home 	Home 	Home 

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1st	2nd	3rd	4th
5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th
19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th	25th
26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	31st	

August 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1st	2nd
3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th
17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd
24th	25th	26th	27th	28th	29th	30th
31st						

Back to school countdown



14
days



13
days



12
days



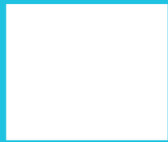
11
days



10
days



9
days



8
days



7
days



6
days



5
days



4
days



3
days



2
days



1
day



School
Today!



How Do I Feel?

Sad

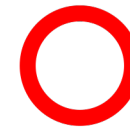
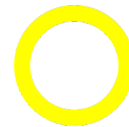
Ok

Happy

A bit annoyed

Angry

Very angry



I can pick a calm choice!



Draw/colour in



Breathing



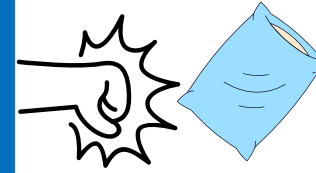
Fidgets



Get a hug



Punch a pillow



Quiet Time



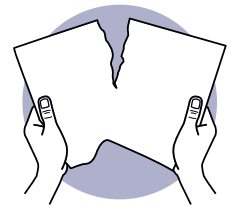
Talk to someone



Blow bubbles



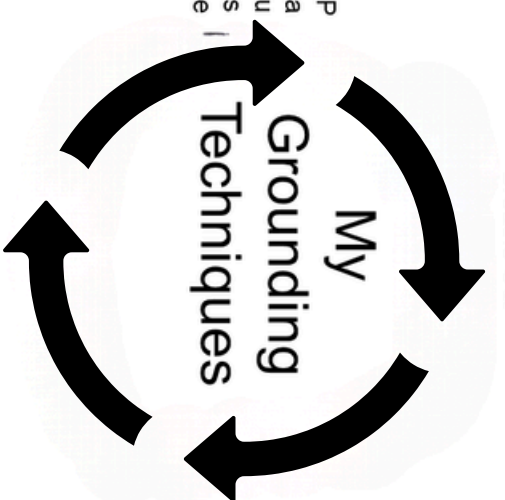
Tear Paper



Breathe Out

My Grounding Techniques

Breathe In



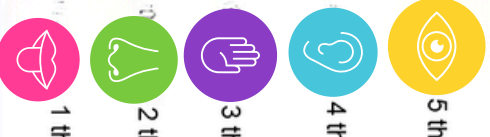
Be A Tree

"I am firmly planted. I feel my feet rooted to the ground. My back is a strong trunk helping me feel stable in the moment. I feel my toes connecting with the ground. My arms are my branches. I feel them reach out into the world."



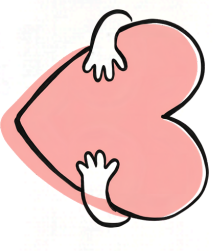
Senses 5,4,3,2,1

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



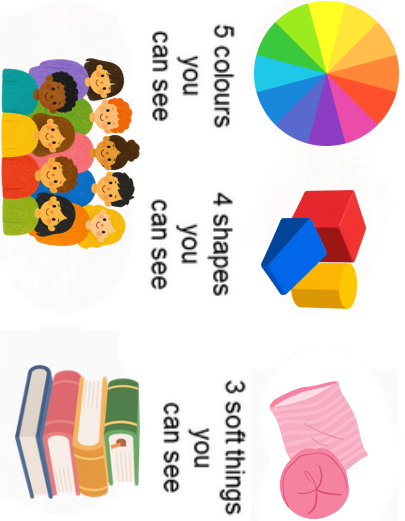
Give yourself a Power Hug

Practice placing the left hand on the right shoulder for a tap and then the right hand on the left shoulder for another tap. Then squeeze into a hug and say something like "I am in control," or "I am safe in this moment." Tap, tap, squeeze, affirm. Tap, tap, squeeze, affirm. Repeat this as many times as needed!



What can you see

- 5 colours you can see
- 4 shapes you can see
- 3 soft things you can see
- 2 people you can see
- 1 thing you can read



Find something in the room that begins with each letter (until you feel calmer)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

