

Building Resilience – Back to School Tips



Building Resilience – Back to School Tips

We all want to help our children and young people make as smooth a transition as possible back into school and to feel safe and happy there. These tips have been developed as a resource for parents and carers to use to support themselves and their children to become more resilient and develop the skills needed to cope with challenging times.

The tips have been designed to complement the Building Resilience primary and secondary school resource. The themed units engage pupils, families and staff in raising awareness and understanding of 10 protective factors for our mental health and wellbeing. These protective factors have been drawn from key research around mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Relationships matter

Your child

Support your child to contact a friend from school, chat online or spend some time together before the start of term. For children who may find this difficult, help plan an activity or discuss ideas of what they could talk about.



Think of ways your child can feel connected to you when they return to school; give them a picture, a written message or a familiar object that they can take with them in their pocket or bag. Schools will give advice on what your child can bring with them initially.

You

Arrange to meet or call a friend or another parent, have a chat and share your plans for returning to school. Suggest walking to school together or arrange to meet up after school starts.

Together

Share anything important that has happened during lockdown with school at the start of term- let them know about any family changes, positive achievements or challenges experienced. Your child may want to draw a picture or take a photo of something positive they have done to share with a staff member or their friends.

Everyone needs kindness

Your child

Encourage your child to think of ways they can be kind to others and pay attention and praise your child when you notice them doing this. 'It was kind of you to ... share with your friend/ include them in your group at break.'



Children learn by watching others– show or tell your child ways you have been kind to others. For example, 'I had a chat with our neighbour, she looked a bit sad.'

You

Notice other parents on their own in and around the school, you never know who may welcome a friendly greeting or chat.

Above all, be kind to yourself. We've all been through exceptional circumstances.

It's good to talk ... and listen

Your child

Notice when is a good time and make space for your child to talk about things. This may be walking the dog, in the car or at bedtime. Create opportunities for your child to build a relationship with another family member, trusted adult or professional.



Be available to actively listen to what your child is thinking or how they are feeling. Name what you think they are feeling, let them know you understand and try not to jump in too soon with a solution. For example. 'It sounds like you're worried about having no one to play with, I can see why that's upsetting you.'

After the school day, your child may need time to wind down before telling you about their day. You could try sharing something about your day first.

You

Think about who you can talk to about any concerns or worries you have, such as a friend, family member or maybe a professional.

Find positive moments, however small, each day

Our brains are wired to notice threats, sometimes that stops us seeing the good stuff. That can mean we have to really try to be positive.

Your child

Help your child identify the positive things about lockdown easing or returning to school. Who might they be looking forward to seeing or what might they be looking forward to doing?



You

Consider the positives for you of lockdown easing and children returning to school.

Together

It can be helpful to make time each day to think of one or two positive things. It may be nice to write these down in diary or post them in a jar, share them with your child and listen to their ideas. You could have a phrase like 'Today I loved ... playing football with you.'

Remember we can cope – we just did

Your child

It can be unsettling not knowing what may happen. Help your child focus on all the things they do know, such as how to get to school, what they will wear, seeing a friend. Introduce new information gradually as it becomes available.

Everyone is a unique individual, discuss with your child the little things that they can do or have already achieved. Remind them of these skills and successes when embarking on a new challenge.

You

It is normal that many children and parents will be feeling anxious, try to focus on how you will manage rather than what might go wrong. Show confidence, even if you are feeling a bit wobbly, it helps that your child sees that you have a plan to carry out together.



We all need some time out

Your child

Reflect on what you have noticed helps or may help your child to cope with new or difficult situations or emotions such as listening to music, jumping on the trampoline, etc. It might be helpful to practice new coping strategies together and plan for how these can be used when things are tricky.



You

Being a parent can be really tough, doing things to look after our own wellbeing helps to manage stress, boost our confidence and makes us more able to cope with the ups and downs. Try to prioritise doing something that improves your wellbeing – it might help to set aside some time each day. You could – chat with a friend, go for a walk, read a book, go fishing, etc.

Together

If appropriate share with your child a way you have managed a difficult situation.

Small things can make a difference

Your child

Discuss with your child what they did to make a difference to someone in your community or your environment over the past few months. Like displaying a rainbow, shopping for a grandparent or cutting the grass for a neighbour.



Acknowledge the small things – for example notice your child when they help a sibling, put litter in the bin, help around the home.

You

Talk about who or what made a difference to you or your family during lockdown. This could be something that seems small, like someone calling when you needed cheering up. Consider how you made a difference and what else you'd like to do.

Together

By each of us washing our hands, wearing a mask and keeping a distance we help protect others.

Keep going, or get started

It's proven that physical activity boosts our sense of wellbeing.

Your child

If your child started to be more active during lockdown, think about how this can be continued. If not, what small steps could you encourage. Be curious about what may interest them and plan how they could try something new.



You

A lot of us were more active individually as well as together as a family – playing games, going for cycle rides and walks together. We will have noticed the benefit; plan how you can keep these activities going.

Together

As lockdown eases we can benefit from more exercise outdoors and reduce some of family screen time and online activity.

Remember little rewards to yourself and family can help establish a good habit!

Be proud of your child and yourself

Your child

Help your child make a list of the things they have learnt and enjoyed over the last few months. For example learned to hula hoop, baking, mountain biking. Share and celebrate these with family and friends.



You

Think about and share all the ways you and the family have adjusted to the challenges over the last few months and acknowledge together, the strengths you've shown. There may have been ups and downs but remind yourself of the things you managed to do. Such as using video calls, cooking family meals, supporting your child with their learning or exploring your neighbourhood.

Together

You may wish to put together a scrap book or time capsule to help remember this extraordinary time. It could include photographs of the things you did at home, news articles, letters, interviews from different family members, etc.

A new journey starts with a step ...

Your child

Talk to your child about what they would like to learn or get better at by the end of this term, such as a sport's skill, a new hobby, being able to cook something, dress themselves, etc.



You

Think about something positive you can start to do, or you keep doing when your child returns to school. For example start a new class, exercise, meet a friend, complete a home improvement project.

wellbeing visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/backtoschool where you will be able to watch the narrated webinars developed for parents and carers:

'Moving On, Coming Together. Supporting your child's wellbeing on the return to learning establishments'

'Moving On, Coming Together. Looking after our own wellbeing'

These webinars and tips compliment the training already offered to staff across Edinburgh to help them to support their own and children and young people's wellbeing.

If you would like to know more about the supports available for parents and carers or children and young people in your local area go to www.edinburgh.gov.uk/pacs or email supportingparentsandcarers@edinburgh.gov.uk



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

ترجمے کے لئے حاضر بسعدنا توفير الترجمة 很乐意翻译
MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব

You can get this document on tape, in Braille, **large print** and various computer formats if you ask us. Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service (ITS) on 0131 242 8181 and quote reference number 20-6392. The ITS can also give information on community language translations.