

3 BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEL TIPS FOR FAMILIES

Times of transition can be both exciting and challenging for kids, and going back to school is a big one. Social and emotional learning (SEL) can help parents and caregivers set the tone for a strong school year. Here are 3 ways to start.

What is social and emotional learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps children and adults develop the skills we need for every area of life, from academics and careers to healthy relationships and overall well-being—skills like managing our emotions, communicating effectively, setting and achieving goals, and making good choices.

Tip #1: Stay connected.

Feeling connected, loved, and supported can help your child return to school with more confidence.

- Make extra time to connect with your child as the new school year starts.
- Create a simple daily routine, like eating a snack together or sharing one good thing about your day at the end of the night.
- Invite your child to share how they're feeling about going back to school—and listen!
- Check your own emotions, which can impact how children feel. Model calmness and share what you're looking forward to.



Tip #2. Help them make a plan and problem-solve.

To help your child feel prepared, it can help to talk about how the school day will go so they know what to expect every step of the way. If problems arise, listen to your child's concerns and help them brainstorm solutions.

- Involve your child in making a plan for school days, from how they'll get ready to what will happen after school. For older children, also make a homework plan.
- Make time to listen to your child about how school is going and how they're feeling about friends and teachers.
- Empower them to solve problems with questions like, "What could you do to make the situation better?"



Tip #3: Keep communication lines open.

Positive partnerships between families and schools improve children's academic achievement, social competencies, and emotional well-being.

- Let your child's teacher know that you want to partner with them and play a role in your child's education.
- Share any important information you want your child's teacher to know about them.
- Ask what you can do at home to support the social, emotional, and academic development that's happening at school.

