

Supporting Student Wellbeing – Returning to School

As we return to on campus learning we know that we will have a number of students that will be feeling a little (or a lot) anxious about returning to school.

So what can you do if your child is feeling anxious about returning?

Before returning to school

- Increase predictability –an anxious child is likely to feel safe if they have a clear understanding of what returning to school will be like:
 - Re-establish routines that resemble a school day (Waking up, getting dressed, possibly an earlier bedtime etc)
 - Acknowledge your child’s worries, but remind them that you and the teachers are there to help them stay safe. Make sure you stay calm and are positive about returning to school.
 - Communicate with your child what their first day may look like
 - Where will they need to go in the morning
 - What might people look like wearing mask? Do they want to wear a mask?
 - Who will they play with?

On the day

- Neuroscience has shown that connection increases a sense of safety.
 - Consider meeting a friend on your way to school
 - Consider role playing/demonstrating saying hello to friends and teachers.
- Use supportive statements to convey both support and a belief they can succeed:
 - Validation + Optimism = Support
 - Examples of a supportive statement: “I know this is hard, but I believe you can do this,” “I can see you’re worried, but you’ve got this,” or “Returning to school can be scary, but I believe you can cope.”

Penny Bergen and Erin Mackenzie from the New Daily have also written a helpful article: <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/coronavirus/2021/10/14/children-back-at-school/>

For more information on Anxiety and how you may help your child the ACT Education psychology service have produced three short videos to help you support your child as they return to school in the next couple of weeks. The videos are on YouTube and are titled:

- [Understanding Anxiety](#)
- [Responding to Your Child’s Anxiety](#)
- [Return to School Plan](#)



There are also a number of resources/ programs in the community that may be of benefit:

The Brave Program

The Brave program is designed to help young children aged 3 – 7 years who are experiencing anxiety or who are showing early signs of becoming anxious. The program is completed by the parents, who in turn can help their children. It involves 4 sessions that cover a range of strategies that parents can use to help their child to learn coping skills, and to face their fears.

<https://www.brave-online.com/new-brave-for-young-children-parent-program/>

Cool Little Kids

Cool Little Kids Online is a parenting program that aims to increase the confidence of children aged 3 – 6 years so they have fewer anxiety problems as they grow. It is based on the world renowned Cool Little Kids program developed at Macquarie University. The program uses the principles of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and is backed by scientific studies showing its effectiveness in reducing current and future fears and worries for young children. The program contains 8 'modules' with easy to read information, practical skills, videos and stories from other parents who have done the program. Each module takes about 30-60 minutes to complete.

<https://coollittlekids.org.au/login>

Mindmap: ACT Youth Portal

[Mindmap](#) is the new ACT Youth Mental Health Navigation Portal, developed to help children and young people navigate Canberra's mental health system and supports. The portal has around 300 online resources relating to mental health and wellbeing, including, understanding mental health challenges, useful strategies, and best practice resources. It's also available to help parents, carers and service providers link up with existing local services and supports.

We are really looking forward to welcoming all of our students back over the next two weeks and their wellbeing is paramount to us. Please reach out to your child's teacher if you have any questions about them returning to school