

Transitioning from lockdown to a new normal

A guide for parents

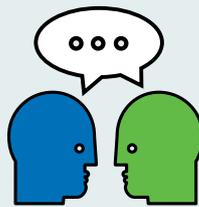
Life during the coronavirus pandemic has been different for everyone. For some people, this change has been small, and others might feel like their lives have been thrown upside down.

This leaflet is intended to give you some ideas of activities you can do to help prepare you and your family for the changes that are coming.

Helpful tips



It's okay if you feel emotional or stressed—this is normal in times of uncertainty.



You are not alone - there are always people available to talk to, whether that's friends or a helpline.



Preparation and managing expectations is key.

What is normal?

You might just about feel like your children have got used to staying at home during school time, and it is the new normal. It's important to remember that we are all creatures of habit and, regardless of our age, we like a routine.

This means you should manage your expectations in regards to mood and behaviour when life is changing. If you can expect that all the members of your family might struggle with the changes and be more moody and/or behave more unpredictably, this will help you to cope when it happens.

Managing expectations

Take a moment to think about these questions:

- What, if anything, do you enjoy about life during lockdown?
- What, if anything, do you dislike about life during lockdown?
- Are any of these things in your control?
- What do you think will be the most difficult change to your life as lockdown is lifted?
- Will this be the same for the other members of your household? If not, how are they different?

Further resources

We understand that this has been a hard time for many people, and it will continue to be hard for a while until we're all settled into a routine we can stick to. There is no shame in seeking extra support or advice if you need it.

Below are some links to resources and other information you may find useful.

[7 Cs of resilience](#)

[Improving low mood](#)

[Back to school](#)

[How do I feel?](#)

[Identifying depression](#)

[Activities to build resilience](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing toolkit](#)

[Getting a good night's sleep](#)

[Think Good Feel Good: A CBT workbook](#)

[Mindfulness and emotions](#)

[Anxiety in adolescents](#)

[Relaxation tapping for children](#)

[Children experiencing bereavement](#)

[Tackling anxiety](#)

[Mindfulness videos](#)

[Accepting uncertainty](#)

[Covid19 information](#)

With **all of us** in mind.

Preparation activities

No matter whether children are going back to their usual school, starting a new school or class, or have been going to school throughout the lockdown period, it is important to prepare them for the upcoming changes to their daily routine.

Going back to school

As a family take some time to note down how things have changed and what you have enjoyed or disliked about lockdown.



Create two weekly schedules to compare life before lockdown and life during lockdown. If you know what your schedule will involve for the first week of school, write that down too!



Print/draw two clocks. Colour in the time you currently spend with your child in one colour and the time you spend apart in another colour on the same clock. Do the same for how many hours you expect to spend with your child when they go back to school.



For the week before school starts, get your child into the routine of getting ready for school. This means going to bed at a reasonable time, getting up at the time they would normally get up for school, putting on their uniform etc. You could even go for a short walk to get them used to leaving home at that time.



Ask your child to visualise school and describe what they remember. Ask them questions like who would be around them, where they would be sitting and what they would be doing.



Encourage children to plan a fun activity to do every night after school for the first week so they have something to look forward to. Write this down on a timetable so everyone has visualise it.



Have them draw a map of their school and describe to you what it looks like and what they do in each part of the school. It's okay if they've forgotten parts of it; you can use questions to prompt them to remember.

Going to a new school



Find out if there is a virtual tour/paper map of the school to help children visualise where they will go on their first day.



Create an 'All about me' poster or booklet to describe to their new teacher what they like/dislike, what hobbies they have, who they live with, how they usually feel at school etc.

Helpful tips

- Make sure children know that the new school rules are there to ensure their safety, and it is important to follow them.
- You should be getting information from school around the new rules and structure of the day or classroom set up. Teachers are aware of how disruptive and anxiety-inducing returning to school can be, so they want it to be as easy as possible.
- All behaviour is communication. If your child is behaving differently or more disruptively, it might be that they don't know how else to communicate their feelings or their fears. They might not even be able to identify or name their feelings or fears. Take time to think about what might be bothering them and try different activities/exercises to help them express themselves in a more positive way.