

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Back-To-School Tips for Parents



1. Acknowledge the pandemic changed all our lives (and may continue).

Everyone, including your student, was impacted by the previous year in some capacity. Many challenges have not been forgotten and a lot of us are still struggling with our “new normal.” Acknowledgment can go a long way in validating your students’ experience. Encourage them to share thoughts and feelings about returning to school. Every conversation does not have to focus on academics. Ask your student what they are looking forward to this school term and how you can help them have a successful year.



2. Make purposeful plans.

After you discuss what’s needed for your student’s success, develop a plan with him or her. Review your student’s schedule for the year. Introduce a calendar to your student to track homework and daily assignments. If you and your student have concerns about a particular subject, connect with the teacher early in the school year. Check in with your student on a regular basis to find out how they are doing and encourage studying a little every day. Be sure to find a distraction free place in your home to meet this need. At the first sign of below average grades, schedule a meeting with the teacher to discuss resources available or options for tutoring.



3. Set a weekday routine.

Discuss with your student what the weekday routine will look like before school starts for the year. What time will he or she get up in the morning? What about breakfast and lunch plans? When is a good time to start homework? Your student may want to experiment with different times or will have to adjust their afternoon schedule for after school activities or sports. What time are they expected to go to bed? Two weeks before school starts back, reintroduce the sleep routine to your student. The transition from “summer fun” to the structure of a school routine may be stressful initially if your family is not prepared. Students typically respond well to routine but make sure you are realistic about the adjustment after two months of down time.



4. Visit school before it starts.

Many students participated in virtual learning the entire previous school year. To ease your students’ nervousness or anxiety (and yours as a parent) make plans to attend your school’s open house or meet the teacher events before school starts. If your student will attend a new school, ask for a school tour and don’t forget to visit the classroom. Finally, pick a day to go back-to-school shopping and to purchase needed school supplies.

If you notice your student has problems with adjustment at the beginning of the school year. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Employee Assistance & Counseling Center (uab.edu/eacc) and make an appointment.