



Supporting your child's well being during times of change

From the school counsellor

Change is a constant of life

- From the time we are born we experience change
- Right now we are all experiencing change on a larger scale
- Children have adjusted to learning at home, then one day a week at school. next children will be attending school 5 days a week.
- Children will have experienced a range of emotions during this time.
- Teaching our children to express these emotions and adapt to change is a skill for life.

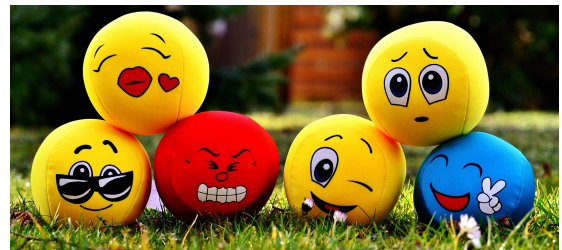


Change evokes emotions

- These may be uplifting emotions like feeling happy, excited or joyful
- We may feel emotions that cause us to feel down like worried, anxious or scared
- We may experience a sense of grief due to the changes occurring for us
- All emotions are normal and real to the person experiencing them

Emotions are normal

- Allow your child to express how they feel
- Let them know it is okay to feel emotions
- Validate their feelings - they are real to them
- Comfort them, let them know they are safe
- Let them know emotions come and go
- Teach them ways to move through emotions - they can do some relaxed breathing, listening to music, doing some exercise, draw or use a stress ball.



The experience of Grief during change



- People experience grief when they feel a loss of something or someone.
- For children they may have felt the loss of not going school, loss of seeing and playing with friends, loss of seeing Grandparents
- Some children may experience loss when they return to school, loss of family time, loss of freedom with learning structure
- It is important to allow children to grieve at their own pace. Let them know grief is a normal part of life. Give them love and support. Allow them to express how they feel, and allow them space to accept emotions and move through them.

HELPING YOUR CHILD ADAPT TO CHANGE

Develop a flexible Mindset

- Find positive in the change around them - *like spending time with family*
- Ask them what they are looking forward to - *heading back to school and being with their friends*
- Find creative ways to solve problems - *brainstorm possible solutions*
- Have fun, be creative, play - *creative play helps develop imagination which builds problem solving skills*
- Practice gratitude - *helps remind us we have things to be thankful for*



ANSWERING CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS ABOUT CHANGE

Children process things differently than adults

- Provide your children with emotional support and age-appropriate answers to their questions
- Assure them that they are safe and give them basic information without oversharing and flooding with facts
- Consider turning off the TV so that children are not over exposed to facts which may cause stress

BUILD RESILIENCE & STRUCTURE

Children learn by watching us, when we model the ability to deal with change, express how we feel and move through life they will follow our lead.

We can also build resilience through:

- Exercise— Regular exercise has positive affects on mood, energy level and learning
- Sleep—a consistent routine of sleep helps mental well being
- Nutrition—Eating healthy supports well being
- Screen time— have a set amount of time only and turn off 1 hr before bed
- Relationships—Sustain relationships- via phone, face time with friends and family we cant see in person.

Create structure and routine by:

- Ensure children have a health sleep routine - helps with learning at school
- Set time for homework, exercise and hobbies
- Encourage children to help around the home

CELEBRATE RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Some children may be anxious about return to school. This is normal after a long period away and the change they have experienced. We can support our child's return to school by letting them know they are safe and shifting focus to the positives.

If you can, find a moment to sit with child and ask them about:

- Things that make them happy at school,
- What they will play with their friends
- What they miss about the classroom
- What are they looking forward to the most

Let them know their teachers are excited about them returning to school.

After your child's day at school it will be important to allow them space and time to debrief their day and celebrate the good things that happened.

**THERE IS CONSTANT CHANGE IN THE WORLD TODAY BUT
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SEEN AS A NEGATIVE
EXPERIENCE.
CHANGE IS NOT BAD, IT'S JUST DIFFERENT**

