

August 17, 2020



CCPS Mental Health Update

Cecil County Public Schools is committed to empowering our staff and families to meet the social and emotional needs of our students, with a focus on behavioral health and trauma-responsiveness, to assure that every student is ready to learn, achieve success, and experience positive relationships.

Did you know:

Every child faces obstacles when returning to school after the summer break. With the current social situations and pandemic, this return to school will be even more difficult.

Strategy of the Month:

Providing a smooth transition back to school whether virtual or face-to-face



*Adapted from the Child Mind Institute, and Understood.org.

Tips for Managing Parenting, Work, and School

Demands of being in school either virtually or in person are different from those of summer activities. Children are expected to sit for longer periods of time, pay attention, stay on task, and follow a highly structured schedule.

- **Daily Household Responsibilities:** Involve children in the daily household responsibilities. Even young children, as early as two years old, can be given age appropriate responsibilities, such as putting their toys away after they are

Tips for Student Transition Back to School

Helping to create a smooth transition for your child from summer break to back to school can be difficult, especially during the trying times we are currently experiencing.

- **Good Nights Equal Better Days:** Begin moving into a school routine gradually, starting now. Begin this by starting to move bedtime up by 30 minutes. Develop a structured and calm bedtime routine.
- **Implement Organization:** Organization leads to less stress. Develop folders where

finished playing with them.



- **Create and Maintain a Daily Routine:**

Routines should start from the time your child wakes up in the morning. Complete the routine with your child until they are able to successfully complete it independently.

- Utilize a *picture schedule*
- *Set alarms* to signify a change
- Empower and give the opportunity to regain a sense of control for teens. Allow them to create their own schedule and provide insight on different tips and tricks you utilize.

DAILY SCHEDULE



- **Create a Separate Study Area:** Work with your child to determine the appropriate area to complete their classwork. This area should be in a quiet location. All school materials should remain there even once the school day ends. This will help your child understand there is a time for work and a time for play.
- **Create Opportunities to Demonstrate Self-Control:** Students become frustrated and overwhelmed during the day. Create opportunities for your child to identify these feelings and productive ways to manage them.
 - Create *relaxation or break boxes* for your child to utilize. These can include but are not limited to fidget tools, calming bottles, stress balls, worry eaters, journals.
 - *Break up the tasks* that need to be completed.

important information/paperwork is kept. Utilize a color-coded calendar to track important tasks/activities. Create a clean and quiet space for homework completion.



- **Ease your child's anxiety:** Talk about your child's feelings. Remain positive as you communicate with your child, even if you have your own anxieties. Communicate with your child about things that are changing and things that are remaining the same about the school year.



- **Practice and Model Self-Compassion:** Show your child that given the circumstances, you are doing your best and that is what matters. Use this time to practice and model self-regulation strategies; taking deep breaths, using self-calming talk ("I am feeling overwhelmed, I need to take a break.").
- **Set Aside Structured Time for Homework:** Create space on a desk or table to work; help clean out their backpack; review the day's assignments; and discuss the homework as well as any questions about it. You can observe your child's learning behaviors while also reinforcing good study habits.



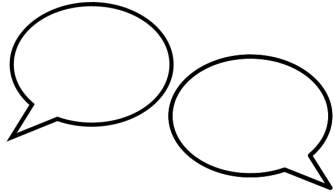
- **Settling In:** Be present in your child's learning as much as possible. If you are on a break from work while your child is engaged in synchronous learning, participate in the lesson alongside them.
- **Open-Ended Questions:** Engage in conversations with your child about their day. Ask your child open-ended questions

- *Set a timer* for your child to help with focus. For example, 5 minutes for task completion, 2 minute break.

- **Dedicate a Time to Update a Calendar:** Set up a color coded calendar with important dates, assignments, and after-school activities. This will allow you and your child to work together to complete activities.



- **Communication:** Discuss how your child can help with things around the house, what the expectations are when you are working and during their school hours. Be consistent when implementing these expectations.



to spark a deeper dialogue.

- **Dealing with a Rocky Start:** Remain calm during difficult times of transition; try your best to not overreact to a behavior. Provide your child with reassurance. Utilize self-regulation strategies and demonstrate how your child can use them. Think and talk aloud about how to rationalize through a feeling or behavior to provide your body with a sense of calm.
- **Be Active:** Physical movement improves learning. During asynchronous learning, allow your child to stand, lay on the floor, or be in a position that is most comfortable for them. Go for a walk, ride a bike, engage in movement brain breaks.



- **Communicate With Your Child's Teacher Regularly:** Good questions to ask include: How is my child doing? Do you have any concerns about his social or academic skills? Do you think he needs my help with anything?

Useful Resources:

- [Encouraging Good Sleep Habits](#)- Child Mind Institute
- [10 Questions to Ask Your Kids About Their Day](#)- KinderCare

If you have a child in need of support and/or resources click on the following link.
[Student Support Request Form](#)

The Maryland Coalition for Families is available to provide the following supports

- Parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with substance use disorder
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with problem gambling

Families and others can reach MCF by:

- Calling our statewide intake line at 410-703-8267
- Emailing info@mdcoalition.org

