

Report to PARENTS

7 Strategies to Help Kids Start the School Year Strong

A strong foundation as the school year begins sets the tone for the rest of the school year. As children gear up to head back to school, families can use these strategies to get their kids excited for school and start the year strong.

- 1. Validate Feelings:** Whether students are starting a new grade or a new school, it can be scary. Give kids the opportunity to share their feelings about starting school, and validate these feelings by letting them know it's normal to feel that way.
- 2. Focus on the Positive:** Starting something new can cause anxiety for kids and adults alike. Help children make a list of fun things they're looking forward to during the school year.
- 3. Set Goals:** Having goals set ahead of the school year for the first few weeks helps them feel accomplished and more confident. Make goals unique to your child, but general ideas include finding a club or an activity to be part of, introducing themselves to one student they don't know, or reading a book in the first month or quarter of the school year.
- 4. Visit the School:** Many schools offer tours of the school or open houses for new students. Take advantage of this to help your child become familiar with a new building or classroom and how to navigate the school.
- 5. Meet With Teachers:** When students can meet their teachers ahead of the



school year, it'll make them feel calmer when they show up for school the first day. Have your child write a "hello note" to their teacher that lets them introduce themselves and start building the connection that is so important to their success during the school year.

- 6. Connect With Friends:** Get your child together with friends, including new friends who will be in class with them, to talk about how they all feel about starting the new year. Have them take turns sharing what they're looking forward to the most and what hesitations they might have.
- 7. Set Up Accommodations and Specialized Services:** Individualized and equitable learning is a top priority in schools. This means that your child has access to individualized learning programs and specialized accommodations to help them learn in ways that maximize success for them. Connect with the school district or the school's administrators to set up these accommodations and services before the school year begins.