

# **Back to school anxiety – How to help children transition back to school.**

**Is your child stressed or worried about returning to school?**

**Would you like some helpful ways for your child to be calmer and self regulate?**

# Back to school anxiety – How to help children transition back to school.

Whether your child has been home-schooling on and off for the past 2 years, or returning from school holidays. Some schools have started back for Term 1 for 2022, with only essential workers, there is still the uncertainty surrounding schools for the past 2 years, with so much change, routines have been disrupted, classes in person, then on zoom, schools starting 2 weeks later, it's understanding, that you might find your children being anxious and stressed, about school returning.

Below are few pointers to help with your children feeling calm, positive and ready. Some mindfulness and yoga with positive affirmations.

Younger children especially, as well older children, anxiety and stress may manifest themselves in a physical way, for example, headaches, sore tummies, they may become clingy, behaviour may become different or difficult.

It is ok for the children to feel this way, we need to show empathy and compassion. They may feel clingy and separation anxiety, Answer any questions age appropriately. We need to stay calm and positive for our children and let them know we love and care for them and have a chat with them about their fears or anxiety.

- On the first day or even week let them bring something small (that's not distracting) token that they can pop in the bag or pocket to place the item in to help them stay connected with you/family/home, it will help make them feel safe and connected to you.
- Routine – routine is very important as children like to know what is going to happen and when, it helps make them feel stable and secure and safe in their environment.
- Stress ball – Squeezing a stress ball reduces tension by allowing the muscles in your arms to relax, particularly if combined with rhythmic breathing (breathe in & squeeze, breathe out and unclench)
- Positive talk – See page 4
- Journal
- Deep breathing – See page 3
- Breathing and mindfulness, mantras and affirmations



- Deep breathing – Sit up tall, relax your shoulders and jaw. Inhale slowly through your nose, counting 1,2,3,4 – Then exhale through mouth counting 1,2,3,4.
- Buzz like a bee. Sit in a comfortable place, relax your shoulders, breathe in through your nose and then breathe out making a bzzz sound or a mm sound. Only breath out for as long as its comfortable and feels good. The humming helps by focusing on your breath, increase focus and concentrations, relieves anxiety and promotes calm and helps you to relax.

### **Other helpful ways is by grounding**

Take a breath and focus on the below

- Right now I see...
- Right now I hear...
- Right now I am touching...
- Right now I smell...
- Right now I feel...

Yoga is great for helping anxiety in children it will help reduce stress and anxiety and enhance their mood and overall sense of wellbeing. Yoga is a wonderful way to put your child at ease and make there return to school easier.

Yoga asanas to help calm back to school nerves.

### **Childs pose** (with affirmation – I am calm, I am safe.)

Child's pose is a stress-relieving pose

- Kneel down on the floor, with the knees and feet joined.
- Fold and bend the knees and sit back on the heels.
- Keep the upper body straight.
- Raise the hands straight overhead.
- Bend forward all the way down, so that the chest touches the knees.
- Rest the hands, extending in front, on the floor.
- Stretch the upper body forward, and touch the forehead to the ground.

## **Forward fold**

- Stand in mountain pose.
- Raise the hands straight overhead.
- Bend the body from the groin.
- Bend forward all the way to touch the feet with the hands.
- You can bend your knees a bit.
- Hold the pose for 3-5 breaths, and repeat the pose three times.

## **Tree pose**

Tree pose teaches balance, and more efficient use of the nervous system.

- Stand nice and tall
- Focus on something in front of you
- Bring one foot on top of the other using our heel, our knee turns out to the side. (for older kids or if this is too easy bring your leg up to the inner thigh)
- Bring our hands to our heart, and slowly raise them up over your head.
- Take a breath in and out and repeat on other side.

## **Cobra pose**

Cobra pose is the best pose for the central nervous system, improving cognitive control, concentration, and awareness.

- Lie on the floor, with the front of the body facing the floor.
- Keep the legs hip-width apart.
- Place palms against the ground directly under your shoulders
- Push against the floor, inhale as you lift your chest off the floor.
- Keep lifting your chest until your arms straighten, keeping your chest and head facing front.
- Press the shoulders firmly down, and push out your chest.
- Keep the curve of your spine even from bottom to top.

## **Legs up the wall**

Legs up the wall is good for your blood flow and nerves. This pose is a great relaxation pose

- Sit sideways next to a wall with your right hip and shoulder as close to the wall as possible.
- Swivel your body so that your legs and feet go up the wall.
- Stretch out your arms and extend them straight out, to either side of your body.



# Affirmations for back to school

Stay positive as the school year begins.

Positive words and phrases help challenge negative or unhelpful thoughts

- I am enough
- I can handle anything that is thrown my way
- Nothing is forever and I can see a better future
- I am safe I am calm
- I am safe, I am healthy I am loved.
- My family and friends love me
- I am brave
- I am confident
- I am a good friend to myself
- I am open to new and exciting possibilities
- I have the courage to be myself
- I am more resilient than I knew
- I let go of what I can't control and focus on what I can control
- Challenges make me stronger
- When frustrated or upset I can step back for a moment and take a breath
- Like a willow tree, I am strong yet flexible
- I am calm, I am relaxed, I am peaceful
- Today is going to be a great day

There are a number of ways to use these affirmations

A few easy ways is to Sit and say it with them. Do a yoga pose whilst saying an affirmation. Draw on the mirror, type up with pics / kids could do up a poster

Be incorporating affirmations it can help adopt a positive mindset and changes in your life.



# Frequently asked questions

What is kids yoga?

Kids yoga is a fun activity for kids to practise yoga and mindfulness in age appropriate ways. Bringing breath with moving our bodies. Using positive affirmations with activities. Engaging in fun stories and themes with yoga throughout the stories, using songs and props with breathing. It includes poses to increase strength, flexibility, and coordination

What are the benefits to yoga and mindfulness?

- Boosts confidence and self esteem
- Develop awareness of self and others
- Strengthen the body and mind
- Improve co-ordination, flexibility and balance
- Decrease stress and anxiety and increase attention
- Yoga compliments children who play sports with flexibility and stretching
- Yoga, stories and games encourages mindfulness

How old do the children need to be?

Children can practise any of the activities from as early as 1 year with the support of mum/dad/guardian. It's never too early or late to start

## Contact us

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