

---

## Back-To-School Anxiety

Exceptional Learning Centre [www.exlcentre.com](http://www.exlcentre.com)

Most students are excited about starting the school year. Some children, however, may experience a mixture of excitement about seeing friends again, but worry about which teacher they will have and their ability to successfully cope with expectations in the new grade. There are some students, however, who experience more-than-average anxiety over returning to school in the Fall. Reasons for this level of anxiety can range from the aforementioned to imagined fears.

### What can parents do to help their children start off the school year in a positive way?

#### Talk to you child about the upcoming year.

- Allow your child to express his feelings. Be supportive. Talk about past successes in handling new or uncomfortable situations. Build up his confidence.

#### Visit the school a few days before it starts.

- Becoming familiar with the school and the teacher is a good way to lessen school anxiety. Call the office and arrange a tour of the school. Let your child visit his classroom, see the lunchroom and bathrooms. Your child also needs to know how he will be getting to and from school. Take a practice walk to school or drive the route that you will be taking and point out landmarks together.

#### Start a school routine schedule a week or two before the first day.

- It takes time to adjust to sleep habits. So get the kids back on track by sending them to bed and waking them up at the times that they will need to during the school year. It may be hard to get them to go to bed when the sun is still shining, but by the time school starts, they will be used to the new routine.

#### Send a family picture or a note with your child the first day to offer comfort.

- Put it in his nap-sack, pocket or lunch-bag. He can take it out and look at it when he feels nervous or anxious in any way. If your child is older, write a note in a secret code and tell him how to decode it. Every child needs to feel love and support from home, especially when faced with new situations.

#### Say "good-bye" and go.

- When taking your child to school or the bus stop for the first day, try to be upbeat and positive. Remind your child that you (or someone else) will be there to pick him up at the end of the day. Make sure to say "good-bye" to your child instead of sneaking off when he is distracted. If he cries, console him, but do not stay longer than a few minutes.

### Have a great school year and make sure to start the year off right!