

A Parent's Guide:

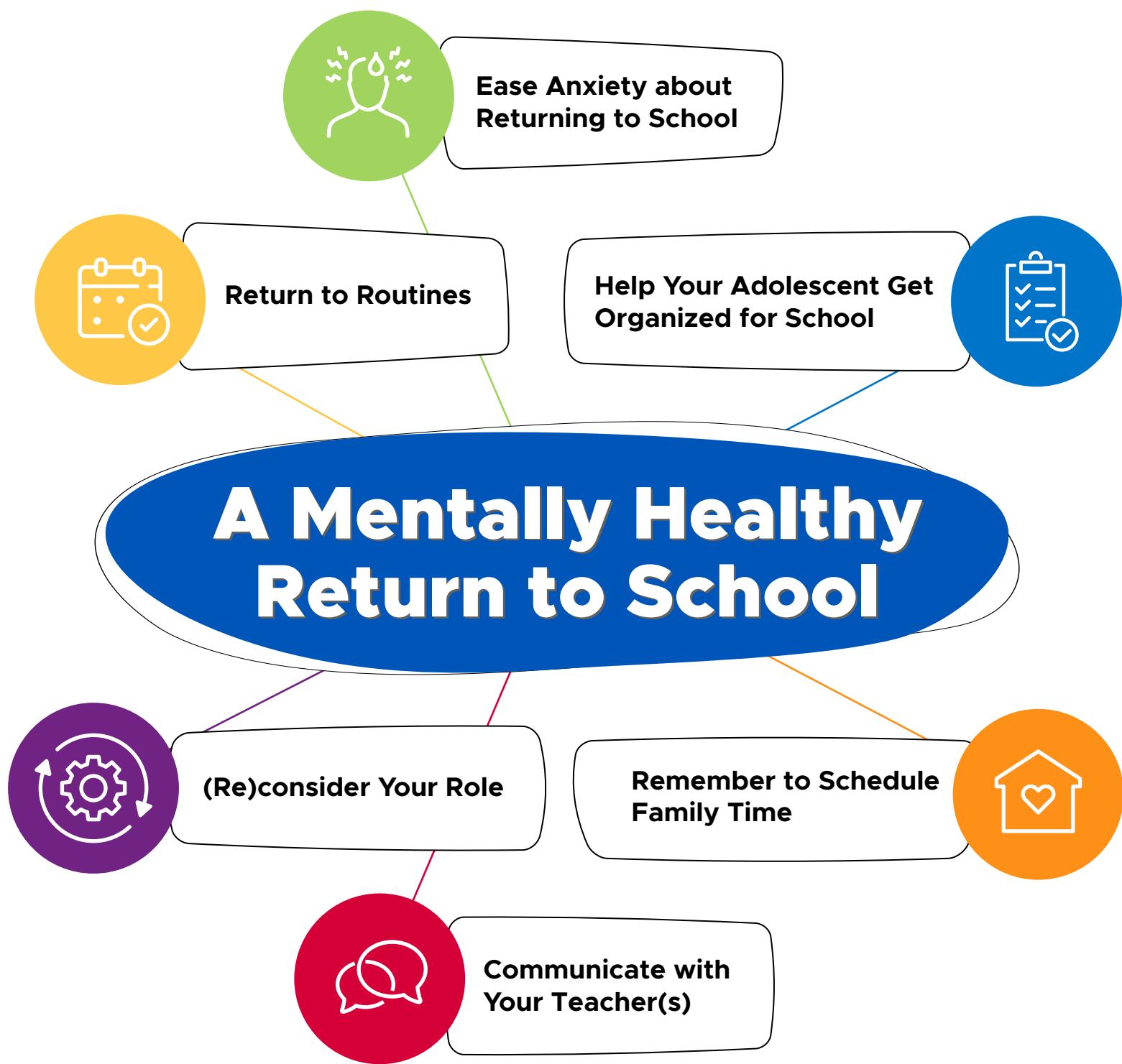


PREPARING FOR A MENTALLY HEALTHY RETURN TO SCHOOL

SECONDARY

A Parent’s Guide to:

PREPARING FOR A MENTALLY HEALTHY RETURN TO SCHOOL



Ease Anxiety about Returning to School:

First, ensure that you are properly managing your own feelings of uncertainty or worry about COVID-19 and school re-entry in order to provide good modelling. Taking the time to help yourself be calm and levelheaded is one of the best things that you can do to help your adolescent feel good about returning to school.

Resources:

1. [Returning to a New Normal: 12 Tips for Handling Uncertainty](#)
2. [How to Handle Anxiety Over Back-to-School Decisions](#)
3. [Back-to-school anxiety: COVID-19 Ask an Expert](#)
4. [How to Talk to Your Anxious Child or Teen About Coronavirus](#)
5. [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#)

It will also be helpful to start to prepare your adolescent in advance for any changes at school, for example, wearing PPE and physical distancing. Here’s how to make mask wearing a habit:

[How to make COVID-19 mask-wearing a habit: Social scientists offer some suggestions](#)

Certain individuals may be very uncomfortable or even unable to wear a mask. Here are some tips for parents:

[A Toolkit For Helping Your Child Wear A Mask During COVID-19](#)

Remember that it is normal for some adolescents to be nervous about returning to school, even outside the context of a pandemic. There are lots of things that parents can do to help: [Helping Your Child Cope with Back-to-School Anxiety](#)



Return to Routines:

For many families, the spring was a whirlwind. With all the changes and uncertainty, most of us tried our best just to get through each day. This means that our usual routines may have gone out the window. It is now important to get back to normal routines well in advance of the first day of school, as this will greatly help with easing the transition:

[Helping Kids Back Into the School Routine](#)

For adolescents, it is particularly important to ensure that they get enough sleep:

1. [Sleep tips: How to help your child get a good night’s sleep](#)
2. [Sleep Health Study - Teens](#)
3. [Tips for Getting Some Decent Shut-Eye During COVID-19](#)
4. [VIDEO - Adolescent sleep during a time of crisis](#)



Help Your Adolescent Get Organized for School:

When we are disorganized, it is easy to feel stressed and overwhelmed. Adolescents are the same way, and they often continue to need support to learn organization and other executive functioning skills throughout secondary school (and even beyond!). Working with your adolescent on getting organized will help everyone feel better about starting a new school year.

FOR ADOLESCENTS RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Resources:

[Helping Kids Who Struggle With Executive Functions](#)

[How to Help Your Kids Get Organized Without Nagging](#)

[From Parent to Coach: Taking on a New Mindset to Get Your Child Organized](#)

FOR ADOLESCENTS LEARNING REMOTELY

[Tips for Caregivers and Parents on Schooling at Home: What Role Do Executive Skills Play?](#)



(Re)consider Your Role :

While you may have done double duty as both parent and teacher during the school closures, take some time to deliberately plan how you will support your adolescent's learning this fall.

For adolescents returning to school - It is ok to move away from the teacher role, but ensure that you continue to provide support and structure for getting schoolwork done, and to offer to help with problem-solving bigger challenges.

For adolescents learning remotely - Take stock of how things went in the spring, and what you might want to do differently this fall:

[How to Set Priorities This School Year](#)



Remember to Schedule Family Time:

Amid the busy back-to-school period, remember to prioritize spending quality time together as a family. Although adolescents typically prefer to spend time alone or with their friends over their parents (and this is normal!), it is still important for parents to attempt to schedule enjoyable activities for evenings and weekends to help you all feel relaxed and connected. It is also important to do brief, regular check-ins with your teen, during family mealtimes, for example. This will help them know that you are making time for their needs and will give them space to bring up any worries or concerns that they may develop as the school year starts up.

Suggestions for spending quality time with you teen:

[50 Ways to Spend Quality Time With Your Teenager](#)

How to talk with your child about mental health concerns:

[How to Talk With Your Child When you Feel Concerned They may be Struggling With a Mental Health Problem](#)



Communicate with Your Teacher(s)

As this is a school year like no other, it is particularly important to make early contact with your adolescent's teachers, and to communicate frequently. This will ensure that everyone is comfortable and receives clear information in a timely manner:

[Tips for Partnering With Teachers in the New School Year](#)



If you have questions, be sure to visit **dsbn.org** to read the **Return to School FAQ**, or contact your child's school principal.