

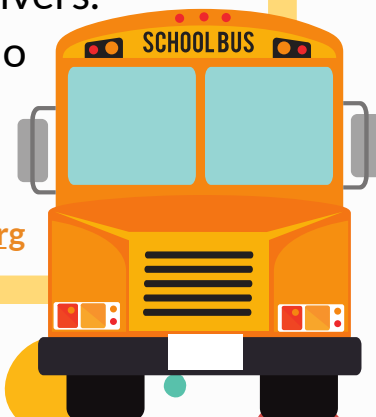
A Back-To-School Connection Plan

Actions to Take **One Week** Before School Starts to Help with Back-to-School Anxiety

In order to get over fear, kids have to come close to it. These ideas give you and your child plenty of room to explore their feelings about school ahead of time.

1. Up the Sense of Security with more frequent shorter doses of Special Time
2. Add in more Rough Physical Play where you take the LESS powerful role
3. Welcome the upsets over little things. This is one way kids can let go of pent up emotions.
4. Sneak in extra spontaneous CONNECTION with surprise kisses and snuggles
5. Bring up the subject of school often to create more opportunities for them to show their feelings.
6. Get lots of Listening Time yourself so that you can LISTEN to the feelings
7. Don't try to fix or persuade. Say, "That sounds hard," rather than "oh you'll be fine." Listen 80% of time.
8. Practice school-time habits ahead of time - including morning Special Time
9. Make a plan for staying Connected - a note in a lunchbox, or a special handshake can work well.
10. Make a separation plan with the teachers or caregivers. Give them a head's up if you plan to Staylisten or do Special Time at school before you leave.

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Back to school connection plan - Day of School

Try these ideas on the day of school. And then try to include Special Time, physical play, and Staylistening during the first few weeks of school.

1. Prepare whatever you can for the "first day." With breakfast, clothing, and backpack all done, there can be some time and space for a child's emotional needs.
2. Special Time - even if you can only offer five minutes, your child will welcome your connection. If you think your child will have feelings to offload, consider offering five minutes of Special Time and allow plenty of time to mentally hold space for listening to their feelings. 20 minutes or so is ideal.
3. Get to school early. This will give you time to hold space if your child dawdles, or becomes upset or resistant.
4. Keep things playful. Try to leave and use the wrong door. Or try to put your child's boots on, See the checklist for more ideas.
5. Create a connecting tradition. When you are holding hands give your child's hand 3 squeezes and tell them it means "I love you." Use it anytime and regularly.
6. Get prepped to listen when your child comes home.
7. You might set out a favourite snack and just be there, or invite your child to play a rough and tumble game if
8. Make dinner easy on your both. Simple hand food or a favourite (easy) meal gives you less to worry about.

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