



# Start the School Year Strong

## Every Family Can Use These Tools for a Super Back To School

The beginning of the school year can be an emotional time for kids and caregivers. After all, it's a transition—and even good changes can be stressful for families. That's okay. There are many things you can do to help your family feel confident and secure as children head back to class.

Building resilience as a family can be fun and rewarding. And you don't have to do it alone! Keep your family strong with ideas and support from [resilient.wisconsin.gov](https://resilient.wisconsin.gov) and [fiveforfamilies.org](https://fiveforfamilies.org).

### Listen and Share With Care

Casual conversation can be a powerful way to connect with kids and ease school anxieties. Let children know their feelings are real, meaningful, and important to you. It's a simple way to reassure kids they aren't alone. You'll also help them become more courageous and kind.

There are lots of ways to get children talking:

- Ask open-ended questions about what they feel and why
- Share the big emotions you felt that day
- Ask permission before offering advice
- Tell your own 'back to school' story
- Think through a challenge out loud together
- Talk about tomorrow's possibilities
- Teach by example that it's okay to ask for help



## Deal with the Big Things They Feel

The start of school can fill families with excitement and anxiety. These emotions can be overwhelming, even for older children. You can help kids recognize and manage the big things they feel. It can give them the confidence to solve problems and build healthy relationships.

These strategies can help kids navigate big emotions:

- Ensure kids consistently eat well and get enough sleep
- Talk about what to expect in advance
- Show understanding and respect for their feelings
- Read or watch a story about going to school
- Remind them of a past challenge they've overcome
- Practice skills like deep breathing or counting to ten
- Encourage kids to play and unwind after school

## Got To Do's? Don't Forget About You

For busy caregivers, self-care might sound unrealistic. But it's an important part of your whole family's health. Supporting children throughout the school year is easier when your own health needs are met. Remember, self-care doesn't have to be fancy to work wonders.

Put a few self-care ideas on your to-do list:

- Connect with loved ones
- Spend time in nature
- Do something you love
- Try to exercise a few times each week
- Listen to your favorite music
- Consistently eat well and get enough sleep
- Journal about your feelings

## Add to What You Know As Kids Grow

No caregiver has all the answers. The truth is, every family learns as they go. Knowing what to expect as kids grow can help prepare your family for new challenges. After all, kids can change a lot over the school year. Learn new skills to keep up with each child's shifting needs.

Fill your parenting toolbox with these tips:

- Ask a healthcare provider for advice
- Share your experiences with other caregivers
- Spend one-on-one time with your kids
- Get to know your child's friends
- Check out a parenting class, website, podcast, or blog
- Visit your local Family Resource Center at [fiveforfamilies.org/family-resource-centers](https://fiveforfamilies.org/family-resource-centers)