4 Expert Mental Health Tips to **Help Kids** Start **Preparing for School This Summer**

For parents and caregivers looking to get a head-start on helping their child prepare for back-to-school, we asked our child and youth mental health workers for their advice on what steps you can take now to make things a little easier come September.

TIP #1

Start early

For many kids, it's normal that schedules and routines change over the summer. You can start now to ease your kids back into a normal, familiar routine. Consider gradually shifting sleep and wake times, reducing screen time, and ensuring meals are happening at predictable times.

TIP #2

Talk about school

While none of us wants to rush the end of summer, it can be helpful to start having open conversations with your kids about school. You could ask questions about what they might need to be successful at school this year or ask about any fears or concerns they might have about it. Some kids may also benefit from being able to visit the school – or the school playground – through the summer.

TIP #3

Brush up on social skills

Try to look for ways to incorporate socialization into your summer activities. You can ask a question like "I know socializing is easier when you're at school, but what are some ways you might like to connect with your friends through the summer?" to help start a conversation.

TIP #4

Check in with yourself

As parents and caregivers, it's also important that we check in with ourselves. Are there fears we have about our child's upcoming school year? Checking in with ourselves and our own mental health will help us to be more aware of what we might be unknowingly projecting on to our kids.

For more back-to-school resources and tips, visit family.cmho.org.

Find Help

Children's Mental Health Ontario has 4,000 child and youth mental healthcare workers across Ontario ready to help parents and their children. Depending on your needs, we can connect you to child mental health professionals that will most help you and your family.

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