

De-confinement: My child is going back to school, how do I prepare him?

De-confinement has just begun. While some children and parents look forward to going back to school, others are anxious and feel uncomfortable.

This back-to-school season is exceptional because it is not the same school as before; your children will not return to the environment they knew before confinement and some children will eventually experience the difference badly.

It will then be essential to allow the children to express their feelings, so that they can alleviate them later on. To do this, it is important that, we, adults do not project our own anxieties onto our children.

Here are a few tips to anticipate the recovery::

- Children need simple explanations to understand the importance of the new hygiene measures in their school. This will help them realize that they are protecting themselves and their friends. To do this, it is good to go through a playful, rewarding and positive discourse on barrier gestures. Make your child actor by inventing rituals, games, choreography... There are many fun videos that explain barrier gestures; watch them with your child. Here's an example: <http://www.eel2.eu/en/news/vie-de-lecole/healthcare-tips-fight-coronavirus>
- Wearing a mask is disturbing for everyone and therefore probably also for your children. But the mask is also an accessory for play, for disguise. You could choose a nice fabric and make a nice drawing on the mask (for example their favourite heroes).
- Let your child take something that reassures them.
- It won't be the school as they know it; in relation to this anxiety, tell the children that this is just a step. We'll go back to a "normal life" but not right away.
- Since the children have to get back into the rhythm of school, it is important to gradually adjust the hours of bedtime and waking up.
- Prepare school supplies (which may have become a bit scattered around the house or damaged during confinement) with your child. You can also buy some new supplies to mark this "very special" start to the school year.



- Contact his classmates and why not invite 1 or 2 buddies home before you take over to get together and renew school and social ties...
- For the children, the priorities of the first few days will not focus on school subjects; they need time to adapt and assimilate the new conditions. The children will continue to ask questions. You won't always have the answers, but you will know what they are concerned about. Trust your children. They are able to mobilize the needed resources to adapt to this exceptional situation.

Don't put your child under pressure, reassure him.

It is perfectly normal for a child not to want to go back to school and to show some anxiety. Nevertheless, this situation should be rare because children, like us adults, need to regain social interaction. They are eager to see their friends again.

But if your child expresses a desire to stay home, you'll need to understand the reasons why. Going back to school after a long period at home can be stressful, such as a start of a new school year. There may be a bit of shyness about meeting up with friends or a teacher you haven't seen in a long time.

This school year has been special for everyone. Not to mention the general anxiety-provoking atmosphere. The teachers are fully aware of this. So there will be a very special kindness on their part when they start again. And it is not a few weeks of confinement that will destabilize your children's schooling. It would be useless and counterproductive to put pressure on them.

Tell your child that his classmates are in this situation, and that his teacher is well aware of all this. The resumption of learning will go smoothly.

For the youngest children, recovery also means separating from daddy and/or mummy with whom you have been stuck for several weeks. Express your wish to spend more time together; plan activities together so that the change is less abrupt.

Don't hesitate to ask for help; talk to friends or family members if you are worried.

The psychologists at the school are there to listen to you. Do not hesitate to contact them at any time by email or via Teams.