

# Secondary Family Tip Sheet

## Back to School for Students with Disabilities After COVID-19 Closure

### Make Time to Talk About School



Make going back to school a part of your **daily conversations**. Be sure to ask open-ended questions that go beyond "yes" or "no" answers.



Discuss what your child is **looking forward to** when school resumes.



Discuss their **questions or concerns** for going back to school.



Offer a variety of opportunities for your child to **express how they feel** about going back to school through discussions, journaling, and art.



Be aware of **changing behavior**. This can be a sign of anxiety or depression.



If your child is **expressing fear/anxiety or sadness/depression**, encourage them to talk about their feelings and consider seeking support from a counselor or healthcare provider.

### Review Progress Toward Graduation



**Review transcripts** from prior high school years.

Review progress toward the **credits needed for graduation**.

Request **credit recovery** for courses missed or not passed.

**Contact school counselor** with any questions, concerns, or to discuss potential barriers to graduation.

Determine which (if any) **end-of-course exams** will be administered in the fall.



### Foster Connections from a Distance

Create **positive social interactions** to ensure connections are occurring:



- Create **social time with family** where communication can occur (e.g., sit down to dinner, play a game).
- Plan ways for your child to **communicate with friends** via phone calls, text, email, virtual games, and/or video platforms.
- Expectations for supporting siblings, or helping around the house need to be **balanced with time for peer interaction**.

### Maintain/Build Routines

Adapt **night and morning** routines so that your child is getting 8+ hours of sleep each night to be alert and ready to learn.

Obtain your child's **school schedule and bus route**. It may be helpful to start implementing a similar schedule at home before school starts.



Adapt **eating routines**. A nutritious breakfast helps boost your child's attention span, concentration, and memory.



**Reduce time on personal electronics** to promote more engagement in physical and social activities and necessary studying.



Have conversations and **help adapt your child's work schedule**, if they have taken extra hours at their job due to the pandemic.

### Communicate with the School



**Inform teacher(s) about how your child has been doing** during the school closure to assist with their transition (e.g., responsibilities and expectations to support the family while home, successful learning opportunities, fears or sources of stress).

**Ask special educators** to help with your child's return to school.

**Communicate important updates** to the school (e.g., medication, medical needs, new diagnosis, change in behavior, life events).

**Plan to meet with the IEP team** in order to review your child's current performance levels, identify gaps in learning that resulted from school closings, and determine what additional services, if any, will be provided.

**Connect with club sponsors and coaches** upon return.

**Visit the school campus**, once it is safe to do so, especially if it is your child's first year at the school.