



RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Support for Parents

Supporting Families with Back to School Transition

For many children, the sudden loss of the structure of school will have been overwhelming. The loss of freedom of social interaction, the mixed messages about the safety of their world and the impact this has had on children's well-being must be acknowledged by key adults.

Supporting children through these losses, anxiety and trauma will enable them to eventually return to behaviours for learning in the school environment.

TALK- Give your child age appropriate information about what is happening. Ask your child how they are feeling, give them reassurance. Try to answer their questions, talking will help them feel calm.



Remind children it is okay to feel the way they feel. Explore vocabulary surrounding emotions, broaden their understanding of powerful emotions.





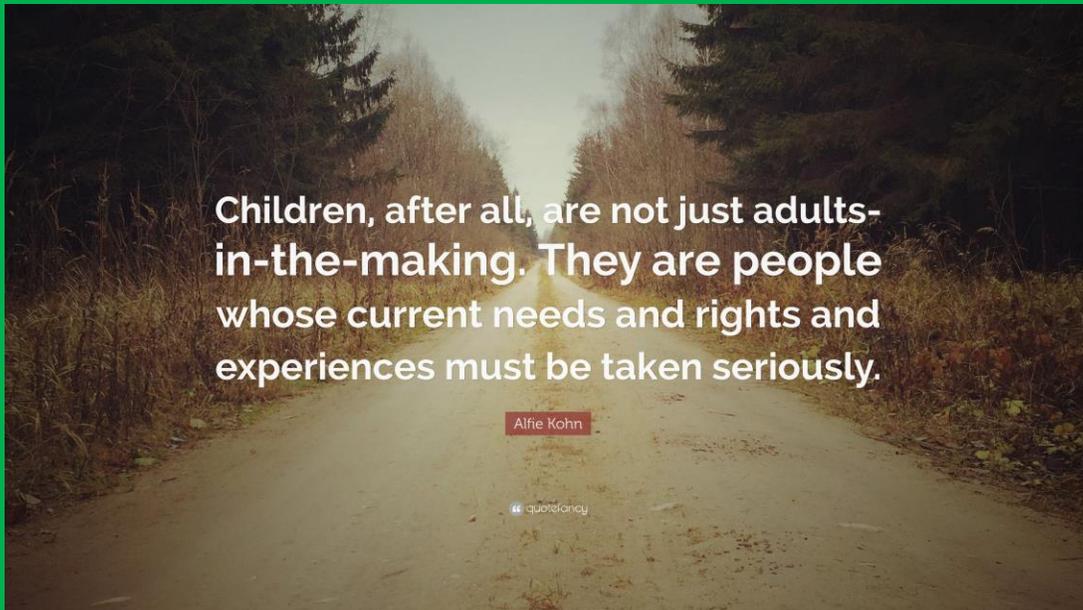
LISTEN- Listen to what your child has to say. Let them speak without interruption or judgement. Giving your child time to talk, modelling patience and good listening habits, will make them feel valued and understood.

Children will be more inclined to share their feelings with you; heightening their sense of safety and security.

children should be seen and heard. listen to them, for they are keenly aware of what emotions are welling up inside them. they have this innate wisdom. it is only when we teach them to be quiet, to not express themselves, that they lose this intuitive wisdom.

ROUTINE & STRUCTURE- Routine is really important to ensuring children feel stability and predictability. This is especially important now as we are discussing a return to school (for some). Children need support to connect to the abstract (to know what is happening next, after). The unknown can create anxiety and stress. Establishing routines and giving children some choice will support their sense of stability.





Children, after all, are not just adults-in-the-making. They are people whose current needs and rights and experiences must be taken seriously.

Alfie Kohn

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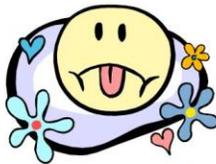
SAFETY- Talk to your child about being safe and what that means in the 'new normal'. Model hygiene practices and distancing rules. The more children see adults doing this as part of every day life, the less anxious they will feel about it. Revisit the school newsletter that explains what procedures will be in place to keep children and staff safe. Safety plays a large role in our ability to learn, concentrate and connect.

TRANSITIONS- Change is a normal part of life and supports building resilience in children. The way 'big' transitions are managed can affect a child's well-being. Talking to your child about what will stay the same as well as the changes taking place will make them feel calm. Investigate any worries they may have. Write them down, scale them (1-5, 1 being a tiny worry that can be solved, 5 being a large worry that may take some time/work to alleviate), encourage children to find their own solutions to their worries (age appropriately). Talk through the worries they have no control over.



During transitions, children may feel

- Sad
- Confused
- Anxious
- Uncertain
- Overwhelmed
- Hopeful
- Insecure

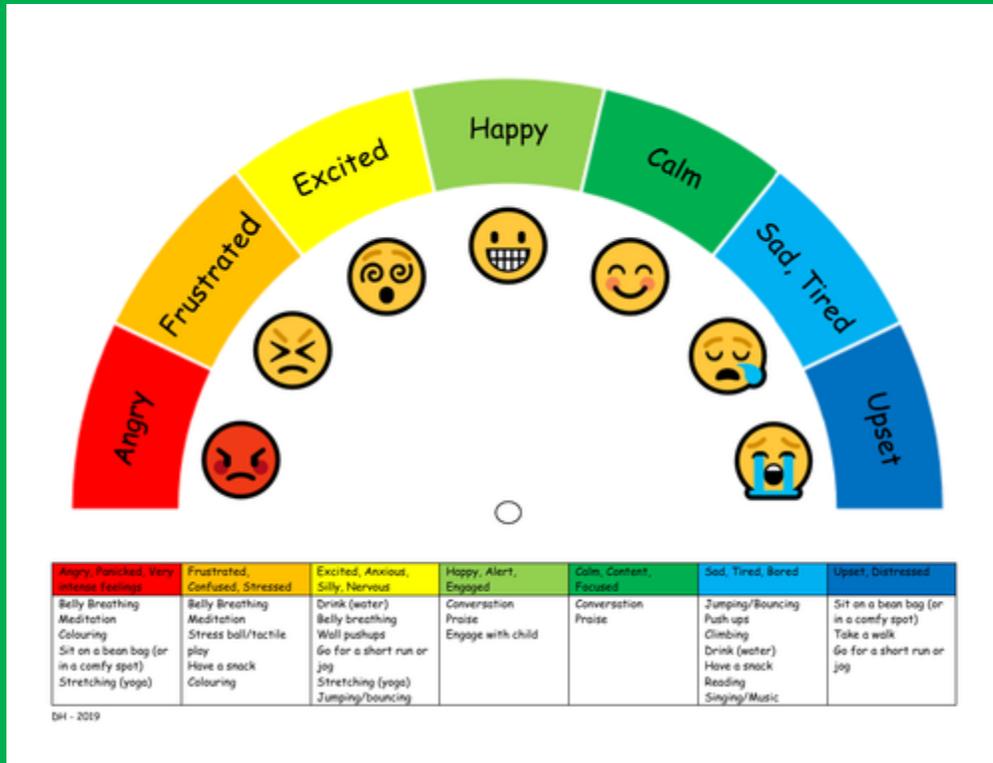


HOW BIG IS MY PROBLEM?

5	EMERGENCY Tornado, Fire, Danger, Serious injury		Enraged Terrified Hysterical Angry
4	BIG PROBLEM Fighting, Getting lost, Someone gets hurt		Upset Scared Mad Anxious
3	MEDIUM PROBLEM Minor accident, Being disrespected, Feeling sick		Worried Frustrated Exhausted Hurt
2	LITTLE PROBLEM Forgetting homework, Lost supplies, Can't decide what to do		Unhappy Disappointed Annoyed Embarrassed
1	GLITCH Losing a game, Not getting the supply you want, Being late		Okay Content Fine Calm

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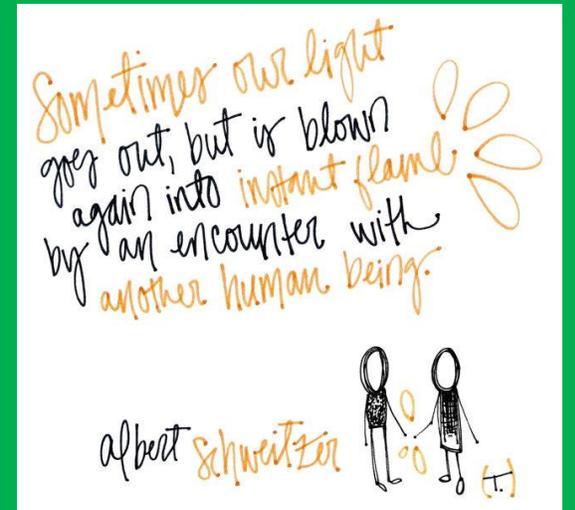
REGULATION- Children are going to find the changes to routines and the new rules for socialising stressful. As adults, it is important we help them find ways to manage their strong emotions in a healthy, positive manner. Self-regulation techniques to relax, cool down and refocus can all support a healthy attitude to managing stronger emotions; especially in times of uncertainty and change.



CONNECTIONS- Children need to feel connected to the important people in their life. Teachers have been keeping those connections alive through emails, videos and phone calls. When children return these connections will continue with reminders during the school day.

You can help your child reignite connections with friends. If they've been finding it difficult, start slow: write letters, do small acts of kindness, build up a sense of excitement surrounding the reconnection.

Ensure your child knows you are keeping them in mind. Some children may need a small reminder, such as a transitional object (a note in their book bag, a special stone) to remind them of you.



REACH OUT- Things change rapidly in the world. We are all learning to adapt, understand and fit in. Sometimes we need help from others such as friends, family or professionals. As a school we are here to support our families. Sharing ideas and thoughts, advising on strategies to support , sign-posting to outside professionals or just offering a listening ear; we are here for you.



For further information or support, contact:
wellbeing@kingslea.org.uk