



Teacher Tip Time: Supporting Young Children During the Return to School

Tips for Educators

Tip #1: Partner with families- Communicate and collaborate to get a sense of the way the pandemic has impacted the both the family unit and the child. Provide pictures or videos of the program staff and building, especially when tours are not feasible.

Tip #2: Use kid-friendly COVID resources- Tools like social stories and visuals have been developed to explain things like the COVID virus, why we wears masks, how to show friends love while social distancing, and ways to practice hygiene. It helps to share pictures depicting actual program staff!

Tip #3: Promote predictability and consistency- Predictable routines promote feelings of safety and security in young children. Depict schedules and expectations through visuals and verbally reference these visuals often throughout the school day, especially when preparing children for changes in routine.

Tip #4: Create a supportive classroom community- Model encouraging, warm interactions with students and co-workers. Try to connect personally with each student everyday by joining in on play, talking about child interests, or having conversations about what is going on in the child's life.

Tip #5: Offer choices frequently- Allow children to have choices of when, where, how, and with whom certain classroom routines occur. Choices give children a sense of control, which can be especially powerful when so much feels out of their control. Offering choices can boost engagement and cooperation.

Tip #6: Make arrival/drop-off fun!- Get creative and make the arrival process fun. Play some music at the building entrance and draw fun images or write encouraging, welcoming statements on the ground with chalk. Dance out to pick up the child or invite the child to hop with the teacher into the building.

Tip #7: Teach emotional literacy and regulation skills- Proactively teach children how to recognize emotions, express feelings, and self-regulate. Use empathy statements to teach children how to identify emotions. See resources below to access free tools for teaching emotional literacy and regulation skills.

Tip #8: Self-Care is Key- Be sure to get enough sleep, eat regular healthy meals, seek out social support, and do the things that rejuvenate you. When you invest in your own wellness, you are investing in your students and your colleagues also!

Resources

Tools for Promoting Social-Emotional Development- <https://bestpractices.gsu.edu/resources/social-emotional/>

While We Can't Hug (Video Story)- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PnnFrPaRgY&feature=youtu.be>

Masks & Gloves: A Printable Story- <https://consciousdiscipline.com/resources/masks-and-gloves-printable-story/>

I Am Going Back To School (Printable Story)- <https://bestpractices.gsu.edu/document/i-am-going-back-to-school/>

Reopening Child Care & Early Education Programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cbmal6k4zr9cjs/SPCC%20IECMH%20Childcare%20Reopening%20Best%20Practice%20Recomendations%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0>