

Parent or Guardian Tips for Transition

Whether or not you have decided for your student to return to in-person school through the hybrid system or continuing with distance learning, there may be some big changes happening soon for your child that can be difficult to handle.



Here are some behavioral changes you might see from your child:

- **Increased agitation and irritability.** Examples: Arguing and losing temper more often, low frustration tolerance
- **Increased tearfulness and overwhelming feelings.**
- **Separation anxiety** Example: It might be harder for them to be away from you or another parent/caregiver.
- **Increased nervousness, fear, or anxiety.** Examples: School avoidance, avoidance of certain activities, or even having bodily symptoms such as stomach aches or headaches

How you can support your student during this time of transition:

- 1. Validate their feelings.** Some students, especially younger ones, struggle to even identify their own emotions. So help them out by guessing—they'll let you know if that is or isn't what they're feeling. Let them know that it makes sense to feel that way during this situation, and it can be helpful if you share about a time when you felt like that too.
- 2. Ask them what could help.** Some students may know this and others might need some help from you for ideas. Maybe it's taking deep breaths or screaming into a pillow, or going for a walk, or doing some stretching or silly movements (example: moving around like different animals).
- 3. Plan for the future.** If they are feeling like this emotion could come back (or you are expecting that it will) make a plan on what your student could do the next time they are having that feeling.
- 4. Make sure to spend some quality time together.** Studies have shown marked differences in children's' emotional health when caregivers spend at least 10 minutes of play time with their children (whether that's playing with toys, reading together, going outside, or another activity you enjoy doing together). This is especially important when children's lives may feel chaotic or uncontrollable.
- 5. Reach out for help.** If you're noticing these behaviors do not go away, make sure you reach out to supports that are available. Contact your student's school counselor if you think your student could use some extra support. The school counselor may offer support to you and your student directly and/or, with your permission, may refer to a counselor or skills trainer from Lutheran Community Services for school-based support.

Joan Austin School Counselor

Marianne Hyatt
503-554-4556

LCSNW Therapist

Pablo Gaspar-Lopez
503-472-4020 (LCSNW office)
<https://lcsnw.org/program/counseling-programs/>