



SCHOOL TRANSITIONS considerations in uncertain times

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students have had to go through multiple transitions - from in-person class to remote learning and vice versa, transitioning from elementary school to middle school or middle school to high school, and perhaps transitions in caregiver availability. These transitions have been very challenging for everyone, and remote learning has impacted the learning experience for many students. School provides individuals with an opportunity to interact with their peers and many may be feeling lonely now that they no longer have access to these social connections. These transitions have also impacted caregivers, as working parents now have to balance work and caregiving demands.

Feelings of uncertainty are valid.

It is completely reasonable for children, adolescents, and caregivers to feel stressed and worried during these challenging times. It is important to validate their feelings and to let them know that it is okay that they are feeling this way right now. Some activities that can help manage these feelings include:

talk about feelings of worry, uncertainty or disappointment

Creating time and space to talk about school can help family members communicate how they feel, plan ahead, and make changes in routine feel a little bit easier.

grounding exercises

Deep breathing, category games, and describing sensations can help regulate when emotions are particularly high.

focus on what you can control

Collaborate as a family to create schedules for healthy eating, social connection, and sleep to help you recognize the control you have over your own lives. Include time for relaxation too!

movement breaks

Brief, scheduled breaks can be done wherever you are and can break long days into smaller chunks.

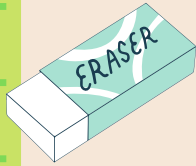
go for a walk

Going outside for even 10-15 minutes can help relax your body and mind.



Setting up for success in the virtual classroom

- Change out of your pyjamas in the morning to 'start' your day
- Make sure you have everything you need close by (pencils, paper)
- Set small, achievable weekly goals to keep you motivated!
- Keep your workspace clean and organized
- Take movement breaks as often as you can - stand up, stretch, or go for a short walk!
- Apps like Forest and Chrome extensions like StayFocused can help if you find yourself often distracted by what's online other than school or work
 - Forest App (<https://www.forestapp.cc/>)
 - StayFocused Chrome Extension:
(<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/stayfocusd/laankejkbhbdhmipfmgengdelahlfoji?hl=en>)
- Use a calendar or calendar app to remind you of important due dates (<https://endferdf.com/free-printable-weekly-calendar-pdf/>)
- Family calendar apps can help build a schedule that works for the whole family (<https://www.care.com/c/stories/5250/best-calendar-organizer-apps-families/>)
- Set alarms or timers for breaks, transitioning to a new task, and deadlines to help with focusing and staying on schedule. Try the Pomodoro technique when working on projects! It works with the brain's natural limits of attention to make a pattern of focus and breaks. Learn more about the Pomodoro technique here:
<https://todoist.com/productivity-methods/pomodoro-technique>





Tips for the "back and forth"



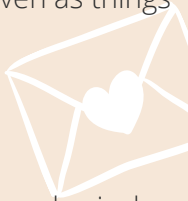
create a plan and maintain routines

Establish a schedule together that can be used (with as few adjustments as possible) for online and for in-person school. Try to maintain this schedule as a routine so everyone knows what to expect from the day even as things change.



review school rules with the family

Keep up-to-date on changes at your school relating to in-person and online guidelines, mask wearing, physical distancing, and classroom expectations. Review these rules and their importance together as a family.



spaces for 'work' and 'play'

As much as possible, keep your 'work' space and your 'play space' different! If you can't, try to change how you use the space like the position of the chair, moving blankets and pillows, and having somewhere to put 'work things' away so that once you are done you do not see and feel drawn back to the work space.

Maintain social connections.

Being in lockdown situations and attending classes virtually can be very isolating. As a developing youth (or caregiver!) it is important to keep in touch with friends and family. During times of lockdown and physical distancing, you can be creative by trying...



- **Phone calls, texts, emails, and letters;** Call a long-distance relative or a neighbour. Draw a picture and mail it to a friend or grandparent.
- **Virtual religious and community services;** Stay in touch with your communities through online or physically distanced services.
- **Social media, using video calling apps:** Explore apps like Instagram, Snapchat, Zoom, Second Life, Gather.Town, Google Duo and more. Start an online group for a personal interest or book club! Use websites like Teleparty, or netgames.io, and more to reach friends online.
- **Board games, card games, and movies;** Go offline / take a break from your computer screen by connecting with those in your household to complete a fun or relaxing activity.

