



## How to Calm the Start-of-School Jitters

*California State PTA offers guidance for parents and students as they head back to school*

The back-to-school season is an exciting time, but it can also cause anxiety for some children - and parents too! Preparing in advance can help your child feel more confident and have a more positive school experience. [California State PTA](#) offers guidance for parents and students for helping to calm jitters during the start of school.

- **Re-assure your child.** Anxieties and concerns are normal. Many children will experience these feelings at the start of the school year. Encourage your child to talk openly with you and with teachers about concerns or worries they may have.
- **Point out the positives.** Starting a new school year can be fun. Your child will see old friends and/or meet new ones. The first week of school offers a chance to learn about new things and pursue interests. Reinforce with your child the power of learning.
- **Prepare ahead.** Have your child pick out the clothes he or she plans on wearing to school the next day. This will save time and stress in the morning. Encourage everyone in the house to go to bed early and get up 15 to 30 minutes earlier so they're not rushing around in the morning. Allow enough time for a good breakfast, and make arrangements for your child's lunch. During the first week of school, find out what additional materials your child may need (pencils, folders, etc.) and make preparations to provide those. Remember: local nonprofit groups and PTAs often can help with supplies, if needed.



- **Encourage safe traveling to and from school.** Find another child in the neighborhood with whom your youngster can walk or bike to school, or ride with on the bus. Briefly review the basics of safe walking and biking. If you feel it is appropriate, drive your child (or walk with him) to school and pick him up on the first day.
- **Plan for special needs.** If your child requires medication, treatment or has special needs, talk to the school administrative staff, then talk to your child about how those needs will be handled at school (what time to go to the office for medication or what foods in the cafeteria to avoid, etc.).
- **Prepare for emergency situations.** What should your child do if you are late picking her up, or if no one is at the house when she arrives home? What should your child do if he feels picked on while at recess? Talking in advance with your child and having a plan will help minimize panic and stress.

For more back-to-school tips for parents and information on the importance of family engagement, visit [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org). PTA connects families and schools, and helps kids and parents feel welcomed at school throughout the year.



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