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Going Back to School

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COPING WITH COVID-19 GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

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Concern about COVID-19, makes the decision to go back to school difficult. Schools will look different

because of recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The virus is highly contagious and people can be carriers without showing symptoms. In vulnerable populations, symptoms can cause severe illness which makes it difficult to send your child back to school. To help ease anxiety, the information below will provide you with tools when sending your child to school.

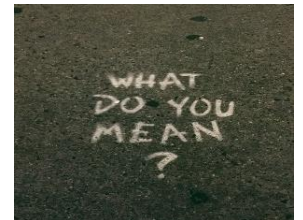
KNOW THE RISK OF SENDING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

As a family, knowing the risk of sending your child to school is important. There is a strong possibility that your child will be exposed to COVID-19. With children gathering classrooms, they may be in close contact with others. Find out what your school will do to increase social distancing safety measures for your child. If your child has underlying conditions, you may have to make the choice to keep your child at home. Even if your child is not medically

vulnerable, the risk may be your child transmitting the virus re-entering the home after being at school. Consider if there are others in the household that need to be protected from exposure.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE LETTING YOUR CHILD GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Each state has guidelines for reopening school, so make sure you look at the guidelines. Below are questions to ask that can provide you details of what your child's day may look like once school reopens:



- How often do you clean and disinfect the facility?
- What is your policy for wearing masks?
- How are teachers social distancing?
- How do you get the children to social distance?
- What is pick-up and drop-off like?
- How many children will be in the classroom at a time?
- How often do you have the kids wash or sanitize their hands?
- How do you screen for COVID-19 symptoms each day? Or What are your screening ...
- What educational options for children who can't return to the classroom?

STAYING SAFE AT SCHOOL

If you decide you are going to send your child back to school, have conversations about the things they should be doing at school. Here are ways children can stay safe and cut down the risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

- Use face masks where appropriate.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough and then throw it away.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap. Rub your hands together for 20 seconds (Happy Birthday twice) before rinsing. Use a paper towel to turn off the water and open the door before throwing it away.
- Try not to touch your face.
- Try not to touch other children's desks or supplies and keep your own area uncluttered.
- Practice safe ways to play with other children.
- Practice polite ways to communicate any safety needs.
- Be open and honest with your teacher about concerns about COVID-19 anxieties.



HOW TO SAFELY RE-ENTERS THE HOME AFTER BEING IN SCHOOL

It is also important to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection after you child returns home from school.

- Check your child's temperature and ask about any symptoms.
- Remove your child's clothes and shoes immediately upon entering.
- Have your child wash their hands as mentioned earlier.
- Wash clothes and facemask immediately or place them in a designated area where they do not contaminate other clothes.
- Keep backpacks and school supplies in one place for homework to reduce spread of germs throughout the house.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw it away.



FINAL THOUGHTS

As a parent, you want to make sure your child is safe while in school. You also may need to consider the safety of others in the household. Thinking about how you are going to maneuver through COVID-19 while ensuring your child's education will be hard. Conversations and precautions can help ease anxiety and help you make the best decision for your family. Ultimately you are the parent; no matter what you decided, make sure you are informed before sending your child to school.

References and Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Consideration for Returning to School
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Tennessee Department of Education Re-Opening Guidance
<https://www.tn.gov/education/health-and-safety/update-on-coronavirus/reopening-guidance.html>

For General Health Information: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
TN COVID-19 Information: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>
TN Mental Health Hotline: 1-855-274-7471
TN Addiction and Recovery Hotline: 1-800-889-9789

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