

Back to School: Be prepared!

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Preparing to go back to school will look different this year than it has in previous years. While the school operations and policies differ from school to school, they all have one goal; to protect students and prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Families and teachers play a crucial role in preventing the spread.

Teachers and school staff can help teach and encourage preventative behaviors at school and families can model healthy behaviors and preventative actions at home. While preparing your child for the start of the new school year, whatever the situation, take the time to talk to them about what changes to expect.

Here are some actions you can take to help prepare your child for the new school year.

Planning for In-Person Classes

Check in with your child each morning for signs of illness (fever of 100.4°F, cough, shortness of breath, congestion, sore throat). If they are experiencing symptoms, they should not go to school.

If your child has had close contact to a COVID-19 case, they should not go to school. Follow the guidance provided by the local health authority.

Identify your school point of contact if your child gets sick. Make sure you update your child's emergency contact information as well in case your child becomes ill at school.

Be familiar with how your school will communicate with

families if a positive case or exposure to someone with COVID-19 is identified.

Make sure your child is up to date with all recommended vaccines and get their flu vaccine once available.

Practice proper hand washing techniques with your child. Have them wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after eating, sneezing, coughing, and adjusting their mask or cloth face covering. Explain to them why washing your hands properly is important and make it fun by singing a song.

Have multiple masks for your child so you can wash them daily and they can have back up masks ready. Label your child's masks with their name. Make sure their masks:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of their face
- Completely cover their nose and mouth
- Are secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow them to breathe without restriction

Practice putting on and taking off masks without touching the cloth. Explain the importance of wearing a mask and how it



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Practice wearing a mask with your children so they can be prepared for the upcoming school year.

protects other people from getting sick.

Talk to your child about precautions to take at school. Children may be advised to:

- Wash and sanitize their hands more often.
- Keep physical distance from other students.
- Wear a mask.
- Avoid sharing objects with other students, including water bottles, devices, writing instruments, and books.
- Use hand sanitizer (that contains at least 60% alcohol.)
- Monitor how they feel and tell an adult if they are not feeling well.

Develop before and after school routines with your child for normalcy. For example, have them pack things such as hand sanitizer and an additional mask in the morning. When they return from school, have them wash their

hands right away and put their mask in the wash.

Preparing for Virtual or At-Home Learning

Create a schedule with your child and make a commitment to stick with it. Structure and routine can greatly help your child from falling behind with assignments. Discuss your family's schedule and identify the best times for learning and instruction, as well as family-oriented physical activity, such as walks outside. A family calendar or other visuals could be useful for keeping track of deadlines and assignments.

Try to find a space where you live that's free of distractions, noise, and clutter for learning and doing homework. This could be a quiet, well-lit place in your dining room or living room or a corner of your home that could fit a small table, if available.

If your child participates in school meal programs, identify how your school district plans to make meals available to students who are learning virtually at home.

Talk with your child about how school is going and about interactions with classmates and teachers. Find out how your child is feeling and communicate that what they may be feeling is normal.

Identify opportunities for your child to be physically active during virtual/at-home learning.

You can be a role model for your child by practicing self-care:

- Take breaks
- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise
- Eat well
- Stay socially connected

Returning to school during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether in person or virtually, will feel different for everyone. By preparing your child for what their school will look like, you are improving their safety and peace of mind. For more information about COVID-19 and preparing your child for school visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID-19 website www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html

Carson City Health and Human Services urges everyone to take an active role in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For COVID-19 situational updates, information, and for additional information about Carson City Health and Human Services programs and services, check out our website at www.gethealthycarsoncity.org. "Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cchhs, follow us on Twitter @CCHHealthEd, call us at (775) 887-2190, or visit us at 900 East Long Street in Carson City.

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