

Top tips for **Autistic** **and ADHD** children returning to school September 2020.





Support your child/young person's **self-esteem**.



- Give lots of time on their special interests and sometimes join them in the activity.
- Ask for their help and advice with things you need to do, and show that you value their opinion.



Try to create a “**low arousal**” home environment to maintain well-being.

- Reduce demands made on your child/young person.
- Pick your battles.
- Give lots of time for relaxation.
- Stick to a consistent daily routine with lots of predictability.

Practise **social skills**.

- Encourage your child/young person to join in with social events with familiar people.
 - Build time out of their bedroom into the daily routine, even if only for brief periods.
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Get into the routine.

- Get up/go to bed at roughly the same times each day.
- Practise self-help/independence skills as part of the daily routine.
- Establish strong bedtime routines well before the start of term.
- Put together a calendar to show how many weeks until the start of term.
- Have separate timetables for each week of the holidays which emphasise all the positive things happening that week and distract from worries about September.

Make school feel familiar.

- Make frequent visits to the school site. Practise the journey. Walk round the perimeter. Go inside if possible.
- Wash the school uniform to soften the material and make it smell right. Leave it hanging up where it can be seen or practise wearing it around the house so it becomes comfortable and familiar.
- Use school lunch box at home.
- Use school bag and pencil case etc at home.

Remind of the positives.

- Look back over memories of good times at school – photos, certificates, art work etc.
- Re-awaken interest in favourite subjects by watching TV documentaries etc

Keep to the facts.

- Find out about changes to school and explain them to your child as simply as possible using visuals and social stories. Emphasise the things that are staying the same.
- Set aside specific times to talk about school. Try not to talk about it outside of this time but note down worries and questions to be sure they are all addressed.
- Tell your child what will be happening at school and what they will be allowed to do, rather than phrasing everything as a negative.

Useful links.

National Autistic Society back to school guide

<https://bit.ly/39Btgqs>

Government advice about SEND children's return to school

<https://bit.ly/2P2Swwa>