

# Going Back to School

## Elementary

STRONG<sup>4</sup>LIFE™



Children's™  
Healthcare of Atlanta

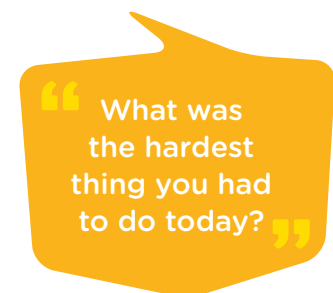
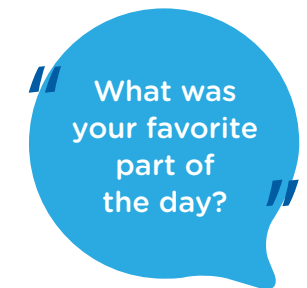
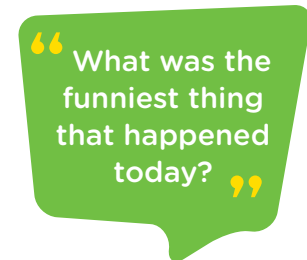
## Supporting your child

Returning to school is a big transition, and every child responds differently. Here are some ways to help support your child:

Strategy	Try saying	Instead of
<b>Validate feelings.</b> Let your child know that you understand what they said—by repeating back what you heard, without judgment—and that it's normal to feel that way.	<b>"It's normal to feel nervous about going back to school."</b>	"It will be fine! There's nothing to be nervous about."
<b>Model healthy coping skills.</b> Model positive ways you handle stress, and involve your child in practicing healthy coping skills.	<b>"I'm feeling overwhelmed by everything that is going on. I'm going on a walk to unwind. Want to join me?"</b>	"Everything's fine! We'll get through it."
<b>Keep your cool.</b> Be careful not to pass along any anxiety you may have.	<b>"Take it one day at a time. I know you will do your best."</b>	"I think this is going to be a really challenging year."

## Talking to your child about their day

Whether your child is tired after a long day, or doesn't know what to share, it's common for kids to give one-word answers. Encourage them to say more by asking specific, open-ended questions.



# Advocating for your child

Even though your child spends a lot of their time at school, you still know them best.

- ✓ Frequently check in with your child's teacher and be open and honest about your child's strengths and needs.
- ✓ If your child is facing challenges outside of school, let the staff know what is going on and that your child may need extra support throughout the day.



Help everyone **prioritize tasks and stay organized** by hanging up a family calendar with upcoming projects, deadlines and test dates.

# Practicing healthy habits

Practicing healthy habits as a family helps support your child's mind and body while positively impacting their mood, focus and behavior.

**Routines.** Knowing what to expect can help create a sense of comfort and security. Try to maintain simple routines to keep things as predictable as you can (e.g., keeping consistent bedtimes).

**Nutrition.** Children need to fuel their bodies to fuel their minds. Drink water, and eat three meals and two to three snacks at consistent times each day.

**Sleep.** Turn off digital screens and electronic devices an hour before bedtime, and keep devices out of the bedroom to get quality rest.

**Activity.** All kids need time to be active, play and have fun. Encourage your child to incorporate movement into the day by going on walks, stretching, riding a bike, or putting on music and dancing.

**Coping.** Whether it's taking some deep breaths, playing a game, drawing or talking to someone, encourage your child to practice healthy ways of coping with their feelings and handling stress.



**5-year-olds** typically need 10 to 13 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.

**6- to 12-year-olds** typically need 9 to 12 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.