

TRANSITIONING BACK INTO TERM TIME



As we prepare to return to school, we want to be mindful of the significance of this transition. In addition to the usual shift into the next school year, we have some further things to think about; children have been out of school for much longer than usual, and their lives may feel different at the moment. School days may look different on their return, and we don't have certainty about how the school term will go. This is also relevant for children who are starting school for the first time. We have included some things to think about during this time;

SLEEP

If your sleep routines have been different over the summer, or since lockdown, gradually begin to shift them back to what they will be in term time. Be gentle, and avoid making big, sudden changes.



MORNING ROUTINES

A calm, enjoyable morning can set you up for a positive day. Think about how you can set up your environment and routine; this might include movement (walking the dog, watering the plants in the house or garden). Enjoy a nurturing breakfast with plenty to drink and have time to sit down with each other and connect before your child goes to school.

Try and move your work laptops, and other things you need to do (such as unopened post, etc!) into another room, so you can bring your attention to it at the right time.

EVENING ROUTINES

Evenings are an opportunity to reconnect when the family come back together. You might want to prepare meals and put some things in your freezer for the beginning of term to give you some time to spend with your family, or to relax as you adjust to the new term. Or, it might be that you find preparing food regulating and this could be the perfect thing for you to do on your return home, perhaps together with your family. Think about what might work best for you.



CREATING FLEXIBLE PREDICTABILITY

We want to be mindful that we can't be sure how the term is going to be affected by ongoing changes in school policies, and guidance at a local and national level. Keep dialogue with your children open, and provide reassurance that things might change, and that that is OK. You should have an idea of how things might initially look - try not to look too far ahead into the future.



MAKE TIME FOR FUN!

It is so important to create opportunities for fun! Both by yourself and with your family. These experiences release really important hormones which are a buffer to stress and help us connect to each other. Think about fun things you can do without putting too much pressure on your time around your home or community, to share enjoyment together. You could perhaps plan a couple of fun trips or visits you may do during your week or weekend too - maybe a longer walk, or a bike ride.

MAKE TIME FOR SELF-CARE

Create time for yourself each day, even if it is 20 minutes. Plan so you can have this – it could be a walk on your lunchtime? If you're a morning person, think about what you could do for yourself before your family wake up. If you're a night owl, be mindful of how you can use your evening time.



KEEP IT SIMPLE

The most calming and organising influence on our nervous system is consistency and predictability. Be kind to yourself and set yourself realistic expectations for ways to help yourself and your child.

INCORPORATE MOVEMENT

Sometimes when we get busy, it can be easy to forget the basics. Create opportunity for you and your child to move, each day. This might be a walk, a cycle or a scoot to school. It might be you taking a stroll on your lunch break. It might be going for a short family walk around the block in the evening whilst dinner is in the oven.



AND REMEMBER...

IF YOU ARE FEELING LOW: MOVEMENT UP-REGULATES

Movement shifts your state of feeling stuck and helpless.

Sitting on an exercise ball instead of the chair (don't do this if you have poor balance).

Go out if you can, a brisk walk energises you.

Walk or run on the spot if you can't go out.



IF YOU ARE FEELING FRUSTRATED OR ANGRY: PHYSICAL EFFORT DOWN REGULATES

Any activities that involve physical effort i.e. active pressure on the muscles and joints helps calm you down. For example, using weights, doing push ups, sit ups, pushing against the wall, going on all fours and being the horsey for your child.

Fastest down regulators are hanging, climbing and crawling.

Food: Eat hard crunchy and chewy foods.



FROM THE SAI TRAINING TEAM