



Returning to School: Guidance for Families

A guide for families in supporting their children's social and emotional wellness as they return to school

THE CLOVER MODEL

Clover is about balancing our human needs for connection, voice, movement and thought. It is a model of human development that applies to children, youth, and adults – all of us need balance in order to thrive, and to build resilience when facing a crisis.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the ability to speak up for yourself and others. It's how we understand and share our needs and decisions. All humans want to affect the world around them

Belonging

Belonging is about building strong relationships, group acceptance and group identity. Humans are social creatures, and group belonging is essential for well-being and survival.

Active Engagement

Active Engagement is about physically connecting to the world. Everyone (regardless of physical ability) exists in their bodies – physical existence is the foundation of mental and emotional existence.

Reflection

Reflection describes the human need to create and make meaning. It involves making sense of one's own experiences, emotions and thoughts to create a sense of personal identity.

For more information on the Clover Model, read:

[The Clover Model: A Developmental Process Theory of Youth Development](#)



Belonging

Connection & Community

- **Stay involved with your child's friend groups and school/community clubs, etc.**
 - Ask them about how/if they are reconnecting with their friends
 - Connect with the families of your child's friends to coordinate [virtual or socially distanced hang outs](#) outside of school
 - Reach out to the school and your community to see what club opportunities might be available
- **Once your child's school routine is established, maintain or create consistent family time.**
 - Game night
 - Cooking together
 - Going on walks, playing sports, etc.
 - Movie night



Voice & Choice

Assertiveness

- **Ensure that your child has a safe and consistent space to share their experiences about returning to school.**
 - Dinnertime chats
 - Rating their day from 1-5
 - Roses and thorns (positives and negatives)
- **Ensure that your child has opportunities to feel a sense of control in their day to day.**
 - Provide options for activities outside of school
 - Allow for flexibility in how/when they complete tasks or chores
 - Give them opportunities [to be responsible for something](#) in the family or your community



Movement & Health

- **Ensure that your child has daily opportunities for physical movement.**
 - If your child is going back to school in a remote setting, ensure that they get up and move, step outside, get a glass of water, etc. every hour
 - If your child is going back to an in-person or hybrid setting, determine their opportunities for movement at school. Supplement at home if they don't already receive at least 30 minutes of physical movement
 - Go on daily family walks, or start a physical, hands on project together such as gardening, painting, [a science project](#), etc.
- **Support healthy eating and sleeping habits.**
 - Healthy eating looks different for individuals, families, and cultures. Help your child to have a balanced daily diet that works for them and your family
 - Help your child create a nightly routine to get a good night's sleep. This could mean limiting device use, reading before bed, lights out at a specific time, etc.
 - Develop a homework schedule that helps your child complete their work in time to get a good night's rest

Meaning Making



Reflection

- **Try to create a quiet space or specific time of day for your child to reflect.**
 - Journaling/writing
 - Drawing/painting or other art activities
 - Reading
 - Meditation and/or yoga
- **Help your child develop short term, non-academic goals.**
 - Daily or weekly goals are helpful for younger children (k-5)
 - Weekly and monthly goals are helpful for adolescence (5-12)
 - Create a process to help your child monitor their progress toward achieving their goals [Try this WOOP goals template](#)

Things to Consider...



Possible Challenges	Proactive Supports
Disruption/changes to their current daily routine	Reach out to the school prior to the start of the year to find out what your child's schedule will be. Share the schedule with your child and start the morning and evening routine that you might want your child to use once they are back in school.
Uncertainty about changes to school setting	Be honest with your child about how changes will likely occur. Ask them to share their worries or anxieties and validate their feelings. Let them experience a sense of control and certainty in areas that you and your child do have control over. Develop a routine and provide consistency wherever possible.
Fears of contracting or spreading the virus	Talk with your child about how they can keep themselves and their peers/family safe. If possible, make or purchase fun masks and hand sanitizer cases. Talk with your child about the symptoms so that they know what to look out for.
Worries about returning to the challenges of remote learning experienced in the spring	Have your child clearly state the pros and cons that they experienced learning remotely in the spring. Share the challenges that they experienced with their new teachers then collaborate to come up with a plan, or strategies to address those challenges.
Worries about being academically "behind"	Let your child know that all students experienced challenges with academics in the spring and that teachers will support students in growing academically. If possible, use fun online academic games or activities to supplement your child's learning. Reach out to their teachers for ideas and resources that your child could use to continue their academic growth.
Difficulty getting accustomed to the new rules and structures for the hybrid or in-person setting	Reach out to their school to get as much detail as possible and prepare your child by explaining any of the changes. Go through the new rules or structures and ask them about how they feel about those changes. Come up with a plan for how they can cope with some of the rules or structures that they don't like or may be frustrating for them.

*Choose the template that works best for you and your family.
Fill in activities from each Clover leaf every day.*



Clover Weekly Planner

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							
Nighttime							

Clover Weekly Schedule



Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							