

This message of #WeeklyWisdom is brought to you by Bridgette Nugent from the Tompkins County Youth Services Department, and highlights ways in which parents and caregivers can support their children during this very unusual back-to-school season.

With the temperatures already cooling at night and in the mornings, we can feel fall on its way. For a year that has been defined, at a minimum, as “unprecedented” we hope you and your families were able to enjoy some bit of summer fun. With the autumn season upon us, we know that school, in its multiple iterations, will be back in session in a matter of weeks. A recent article published by [Psychology Today](#) titled *Back to School During COVID-19* validates the diverse array of emotions students might be feeling as the new academic year begins, whether they are attending school in-person or virtually.

The following helpful tips are provided to support those children/teens hesitant or anxious to return to school:

- Just like adults, kids benefit from knowing the plan. They need to know the concrete steps being taken to minimize risk and how they can protect themselves. If studying at home, they will benefit from some quiet where possible and opportunities to connect socially in different ways.
- Kids are very perceptive and will pick up on the stress/anxiety of adults around them. If your non-verbal actions demonstrate hesitancy or reluctance for online schooling or return to school, your kid(s) will likely also be hesitant. One of the best ways to help kids have the confidence to go back to school is to show your confidence in them.
- Helping to put your child’s concerns into words helps anxious kids recognize they aren’t alone with their worries. Visit the [article](#) for some great examples of this in practice.
- Lastly, and most importantly, “we need to be kind to ourselves and each other through this time. This start of the new school year in the midst of a pandemic is not something any of us have done before. It may be messy, it may be hard, and all of us—kids, caregivers, educators, professionals—may need to reach out for help. Doing so will model to our kids that they can too.”

As a community, we will all be navigating the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Lean on your neighbors, community organizations, and school staff when needed; we are all in this together. Best wishes in the start to a new school year!

