BACK TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT
This toolkit is provided by Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life. Armed with a team of Children’s doctors, therapists, nurses, registered dietitians and other wellness experts, Strong4Life provides resources to help Georgia’s kids grow up healthy, safe and resilient.

At Strong4Life, we aim to help educators, school staff and parents encourage healthy habits to foster not only physical health and safety, but also emotional wellness. By eating nutritious meals, being active, practicing healthy coping skills and keeping safety top of mind, kids have all the tools they need to learn, play and grow.
WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

- Administrators
- Teachers
- School Nurses
- Educators and Staff
WHAT'S IN THIS TOOLKIT?

💡 Downloadable handouts, checklists and tip sheets for
  • The classroom
  • Educator and staff well-being
  • Parents

💡 Videos to help kids practice healthy habits, coping skills and brain breaks

💡 Shareable social graphics and captions

💡 Articles on Strong4Life.com for
  • The classroom
  • Educator and staff well-being
  • Parents
DOWNLOADS

handouts, checklists and tip sheets
### Symptoms checklist

- Chills
- Temperature greater than 100.4°F
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches

**You should not** go to work or return to work if you are experiencing any of the symptoms above.

### Going back to school safely

- Dedicate time in your morning routine to self-screen before leaving your home.
- Use the same thermometer on the same spot each day for consistency. Any type of thermometer will do, but if you take your temperature orally (by mouth), don’t eat or drink anything within 15 minutes prior.
- Wash your hands frequently and make it part of your daily routine.

The information provided is only a recommendation. Be aware of and follow your school’s, organization’s or district’s guidelines for returning to work. Please refer to CDC.gov for an updated list of symptoms.

For more tips and expert advice, visit Strong4Life.com/reopening.

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**SCREENING CHECKLISTS**

School staff can use this checklist to self-screen for symptoms of illness such as COVID-19.

We also created a checklist for parents to use to screen their children for symptoms before school (available in English and Spanish).
Clean Classroom Checklist

School staff can use this checklist from our illness prevention team to ensure their classroom is clean and has all the supplies needed to fight germs throughout the day.

Classroom checklist

- Stock up on cleaning and hygiene supplies
  - Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
  - Paper towels
  - Cleaning and disinfectant wipes or spray for high-touch surfaces

- Identify a safe and secure storage place for cleaners and disinfectants when not in use.

- Space the seating to accommodate for social distancing, keeping in mind that students should not be facing one another.

- Stock up on supplies to minimize sharing (e.g., writing utensils, art supplies, technology, etc.).

- Develop a strategy to limit sharing of books, technology, toys, or other learning aids.

- Post signage to promote everyday protective measures and demonstrate how to stop the spread.

- Identify routine handwashing times (e.g., upon arrival, before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing, after going to the bathroom).

- Stock up on pre-packaged snacks and bottled water (if feasible).

Daily germ-fighting checklist

- Ensure students wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer upon arrival.
- Ensure students are wearing masks properly (if required).
- Clean high-touch surfaces at least once per day:
  - Desks
  - Door handles
  - Sink faucets and handles

The information provided is a recommendation. Be aware of and follow your school’s or district’s guidelines.

For more tips and expert advice, visit Strong4Life.com/reopening.
HandWashing 101

Hang this flyer in every bathroom throughout the school to promote proper hand hygiene and help prevent illness.
Preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools

- Promote vaccinations
- Encourage correct and consistent masking
- Practice physical (or social) distancing
- Wash hands, and cover coughs and sneezes
- Stay home when sick, and get tested at community testing sites
- Screen for symptoms
- Improve ventilation whenever possible
- Report contact tracing, isolation and quarantines to health department(s)
- Clean and disinfect

For more information from the CDC, scan the QR code.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN SCHOOLS

Promote COVID-19 prevention strategies for schools using this flyer with a QR code linking to the full report from the CDC.
Coping Skills

As kids grow older, they face new stressors and challenges. By helping your child develop healthy coping skills (tools to help them manage their feelings and reduce stress), you’re helping them become more resilient (better able to handle life’s ups and downs).

Coping skills ideas

Everyone is different, and what works one day may not work the next. Encourage your child to try lots of different coping strategies to help them find what works best for them.

The options are limitless, but here are some ideas to get you started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be active</th>
<th>Find your calm</th>
<th>Get creative</th>
<th>Connect with others</th>
<th>Shift your mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put on music and dance</td>
<td>Take some deep breaths</td>
<td>Color, draw, or paint</td>
<td>Cuddle or play with your pet</td>
<td>Think of something positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build with Legos or blocks</td>
<td>Listen to music or sing a song</td>
<td>Play with Play-Doh or sand</td>
<td>Read a book with someone</td>
<td>Focus on one thing you’re grateful for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do 10 jumping jacks</td>
<td>Give your nose a cold count to 20 or backward from 10</td>
<td>Play an instrument</td>
<td>Play a game with a friend or family member</td>
<td>Identify your top three strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run in place for 20 seconds</td>
<td>Take a quiet break or rest</td>
<td>Make up a song</td>
<td>Work with someone on a puzzle</td>
<td>Think about something you’re looking forward to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounce a ball or play catch</td>
<td>Have a drink of cold water</td>
<td>Write about your thoughts or feelings</td>
<td>Write a letter</td>
<td>Focus on the present moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go for a walk or run a hike</td>
<td>Blow bubbles</td>
<td>Create a dance</td>
<td>Share your feelings with someone you trust</td>
<td>Think about something that makes you laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squeeze a stress ball</td>
<td>Think of a calm, happy place</td>
<td>Write a poem</td>
<td>Ask for help</td>
<td>Practice relaxation (&quot;I don’t feel stressed&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do a yoga or stretch</td>
<td>Look at pictures of a favorite memory</td>
<td>Make-up a new game</td>
<td>Call a friend to catch up</td>
<td>Focus on what is in your control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more coping skills ideas, visit Strong4life.com/coping

COPING SKILLS SHEET

Need healthy ways to help kids cope with life’s ups and downs? Try these coping skills ideas with students. From deep breathing to dance parties, kids can use these skills for life as they face new stressors and challenges.
One healthy way to cope with stressors or challenges is to **practice deep breathing**. This relaxation exercise can help not only improve focus, but also lower our heart rate, allowing our muscles to relax, and calming our minds and bodies.

**Deep Breathing**

As kids grow older, they face new stressors and challenges. By helping your child develop healthy coping skills (tools to help them manage their feelings and reduce stress), you’re helping them become more resilient (better able to handle life’s ups and downs).

**Why practice deep breathing?**

Unlike normal breathing, taking deep breaths encourages you to slow down and pay attention to your body as you inhale and exhale. The relaxation exercise can help improve your ability to focus and better handle your emotions by lowering your heart rate, allowing your muscles to relax, and calming your mind and body.

**How to practice deep breathing**

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
2. Place your hand on your stomach so that you can feel your hand moving up and down with each breath.
3. Inhale through your nose and feel your stomach rise with air.
4. Hold your breath for a few seconds.
5. Exhale slowly through your mouth.
6. Repeat several times or until you feel your body relaxing.

With deep breathing, you want to fill your stomach with air. If you notice that only your chest or shoulders are moving and not your stomach, try to breathe even deeper so your stomach fills with air.

**Triangle breathing**

- Start at the bottom left of the triangle.
- Inhale through your nose for 3 counts as you trace the first side.
- Hold your breath for 3 counts as you trace the second side.
- Exhale through your mouth for 3 counts as you trace the third side.
- Repeat several times or until you feel your body relaxing.

**Square breathing**

- Start at the bottom right of the square.
- Inhale through your nose for 4 counts as you trace the first side.
- Hold your breath for 4 counts as you trace the second side.
- Exhale through your mouth for 4 counts as you trace the third side.
- Hold your breath for 4 counts as you trace the final side.
- Repeat several times or until you feel your body relaxing.

Teaching and practicing coping skills when everyone is calm gives us a set of tools we can use to manage our feelings and reduce stress.
Guided Imagery

Why practice guided imagery?
Our minds are powerful and can use our imagination to visualize almost anything. This relaxation exercise uses words, images and all five senses to help move attention away from worry and stress to a more relaxed state.

How to practice guided imagery
- Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down and, if you feel comfortable, close your eyes.
- Take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Imagine yourself in a place where you feel safe, happy and comfortable. This might be a favorite place you go, somewhere you have been before or somewhere you’ve completely made up.
- It’s up to you.
- Once you have picked out a place, imagine yourself there.
- Think about every detail that makes this place special for you.
  - What do you see?
  - What do you smell?
  - What do you hear?
  - What do you taste?
  - What can you touch?
- Take a few moments and notice how your body feels to enjoy your time in this place.
  - When it’s time to leave, know that you can return here any time, wherever you are, whenever you need to feel calm.
  - Over the next few seconds, take a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Slowly open your eyes, and notice how your body feels. Are your muscles relaxed? Is your mind calm?

GUIDED IMAGERY SHEET

Need to ease students’ worries or address stress? Try practicing guided imagery. This relaxation exercise uses words, images and all 5 senses to help move attention away from worry and stress to a more relaxed state.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

As kids grow older, they face new stresses and challenges. By helping your child develop healthy coping skills (tools to help them manage their feelings and reduce stress), you’re helping them become more resilient (better able to handle life’s ups and downs).

Why practice progressive muscle relaxation?
Stress can cause our muscles to be tense and tight. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a relaxation exercise that helps us calm our bodies and minds by slowly and progressively tensing and relaxing our muscles, one group at a time.

How to practice progressive muscle relaxation
1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable, relaxed position.
2. Take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
3. Begin tightening and relaxing one muscle group at a time. Inhalation as you tighten. Hold for 5 seconds. Exhalation as you relax.
   - Face (suck-up your nose and mouth)
   - Shoulders (lift your shoulders up as if you’re trying to make them touch your ears)
   - Arms
   - Fists (pretend you’re squeezing an orange or lemon)
   - Stomach (pull your belly button toward your back)
   - Legs and thighs
   - Feet and toes (imagine that your feet are in sand or mud)

Now, take several deep breaths and notice how loose and relaxed your body has become. If there is any remaining tension in your body, tense and relax those muscles, while breathing in and out.

It is difficult to learn something new when we are anxious, angry or distracted.

Tense and relax while practicing coping skills when everyone is calm goes as a safety of tools we can use to manage our feelings and reduce stress.

You should be tensing your muscles, but not to the point of straining them. If you are uncomfortable or feel any pain, stop. Remember to go slowly and take deep breaths in and out throughout the exercise.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION SHEET

Stress can cause our muscles to be tense and tight. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a relaxation exercise that helps us calm our bodies and minds by slowly and progressively tensing and relaxing our muscles, one group at a time.
Practicing **grounding** can be beneficial in so many ways. Not only can this relaxation exercise help ease stress and worry, it’s also a great way to improve concentration and problem-solving skills. So it could be a great exercise to try in between lessons or when you find students’ focus drifting.
Sometimes kids aren’t ready to talk about their thoughts and feelings out loud, and that’s OK. **Journaling** can help kids become more aware of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and it can help them explore solutions for solving problems.

**Journaling ideas**

**All ages**

- When you feel sad or angry, what things or what people make you feel better?
- If you were granted 3 wishes, what would you ask for?
- List or draw 3 things you are grateful for.
- Close your eyes and think about your favorite smell. What is it? Where is it coming from? Why do you like it?
- Think about a sound that makes you happy. What is it? Where are you when you’re listening to it? Why do you like it?

**Younger kids**

- List 3 things you are really good at or 3 things you are proud of.
- Draw a picture or write about a happy time.
- Draw a picture of an animal most like you and write about why it represents you.
- Draw a picture of who or what makes you laugh the hardest.
- Draw a picture or write about a time you were very kind to someone.
- Think about a time you and a friend go up to one another, how did you resolve the conflict?
Need help readjusting activities, behaviors or routines before the new school year? Whether your school is doing in-person learning or you’re running a virtual classroom, it’s important to get back into the swing of things by practicing healthy habits. Take stock with our stop, start, continue exercise.
PREP FOR THE WORKDAY

Whether we’re working through a pandemic or not, it’s always a good idea to prepare for the workday. This includes getting enough rest, eating a nutritious breakfast or setting a daily intention. Remember: You can’t help kids learn and grow if you aren’t taking care of yourself.
Let’s face it, working in schools is not always easy. Especially when you’re doing the important work of helping kids learn, play and grow. Make sure you’re taking moments throughout the day to practice mindfulness. It could make all the difference for you and your students.
Quick Tips to Feel Physically Energized

Stretch
Stretching is the best way to restore blood flow to your muscles after you have been still for a long period. Try practicing Rabbit and shoulder-bridge exercises—two useful ways to stretch that you can practice anywhere. Choose your stretch and close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, relax into the posture and hold for 60 seconds.

Rabbit
This yoga pose helps increase blood flow to the brain, which is a great way to clear your mind. Stand up straight, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, then bend forward at the waist and hold for 60 seconds. Let your head hang heavy, arms fall toward the ground and hips reach to the ceiling.

Shoulder and neck stretches
1. Stand or sit with your arms at your sides. Bring your shoulders up toward your ears, hold for four seconds and release. Repeat three times.
2. Let your chin fall to your chest. Slowly roll your head down and around making a complete circle. Repeat in the opposite direction moving slowly. Repeat in each direction.
3. Reach your right arm upward as if you were trying to touch the ceiling. Reach for eight to 10 seconds. Reach with your left arm. Alternate reaching with your right and left arm three times.

Eat something
Maintaining your blood sugar levels can help you control your focus, temper and energy. Plan ahead to take breaks for power snacks, which include a protein, fat and carbohydrate. Try these power-snack combinations:
- Handful of nuts and a banana
- Apple slices and nut butter
- String cheese and crackers
- Hummus and carrots

Drink something
Hydration is important under usual circumstances, but even more so when you’re stressed. In the morning, grab a cup or water bottle and refill it throughout the day. You need at least 64 ounces of water every day; however, exercise, stress and humidity will increase your daily need.

Quick Tips to Feel Physically Energized
Whether you need a morning jumpstart or you’re trying to get over the mid-day slump, try some of these quick tips to feel physically energized. Pro tip: Hang this up near your desk for quick reference.
Want to challenge yourself to practice mindfulness throughout the day? Download our mindful minutes BINGO card and playing guide. You can even modify parts of the challenge to play in the classroom.
Letting Go of the Workday

Helping kids learn may be a never-ending story, but if you're going to prioritize your own mental and physical well-being, you have to let go of the workday. After the last bell rings and planning is done, it's time to turn work off and focus on you.

Letting Go of the Workday

- Take a moment to contemplate today.
- Think about one difficult thing that happened today. Let it go.
- Identify three things that went well. Hold on to them.
- Check on your colleagues before you leave. Are they OK?
- Choose a signal that marks the end of your workday. Commit to stopping here.
- Switch your attention to going home, resting and recharging.

Review this checklist at the end of each workday. Take the time needed to make a smooth transition from work to home.
Getting Your Child Ready for Pre-K or Kindergarten

Want to help your students’ parents set their children up for a successful school year? Share this tip sheet with them. It covers a variety of ways they can help their child adjust to new routines and practice healthy habits.

Managing feelings
Talk openly about feelings. Encourage your child to name and express how they are feeling regularly, so it becomes normal and familiar. You can use characters in books or charts with feeling faces to help your child start to identify and express feelings.

Active listening and validating their feelings. If your child feels they have your full attention, they are more likely to open up to you. Put away any distractions and let them know it’s OK and normal to feel anything they feel (even if you feel differently).

Focus on the positive. Help your child feel a little excitement about starting school by creating a new back-to-school tradition or going to pick out supplies together.

Help your child manage their feelings, not avoid them. Coping skills help them manage their feelings and handle stress. Whether it’s taking deep breaths, drawing, listening to music, talking to someone, help your child practice lots of ways they can manage their feelings.

Preparing for school
Help your child feel more independent, confident, and prepared by:
• Introducing the “new the teacher night” or visiting the school before the first day
• Driving the bus route or drop-off route with your child before the first day and talking about what they can expect.
• Encouraging your child to practice with any items or materials they will be using on their own like, lunch container, backpack, jacket, water bottle, etc.
• Meeting up with other kids that will be attending your child’s school so they know someone on the first day.
• These meet-ups can also help improve communication and social skills, such as sharing and taking turns.
• Creating or maintaining daily bedtime and morning routines to help keep things predictable and to create a sense of comfort and security.
• Advocating for your child
  Check in with your child’s teacher regularly, and be open and honest about your child’s strengths and needs.
  Let the staff know if your child is facing challenges outside of school and that your child may need extra support throughout the day.

Getting Ready for Pre-K or Kindergarten
GOING BACK TO (ELEMENTARY) SCHOOL

Want to help your students’ parents set their children up for a successful school year? Share this tip sheet with them. It covers a variety of ways they can help their child adjust to new routines and practice healthy habits.
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Want to help your students’ parents set their children up for a successful school year? Share this tip sheet with them. It covers a variety of ways they can help their child adjust to new routines and practice healthy habits.
How to Screen Your Child for COVID-19 Symptoms

As parents, we're always mindful of how our children are feeling before they go to school. But this year we'll have to pay more attention than ever to do our part to minimize the spread of germs.

Symptoms checklist

Follow this checklist each day to screen your child for symptoms before leaving for school:

- Cough
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache
- Loss of appetite

If your child is experiencing any of the above symptoms, do not send them to school and consult with their healthcare provider to determine whether or not they need medical care.

Your child should not return to school if:

- They are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above.
- They are taking medication to reduce fever.
- They have a known exposure (close contact) with an infected person.

Exposure or close contact includes living in the same household, being within 6 feet of the person for 15 minutes or longer, or being in direct contact (e.g., sharing a vehicle, coughing, sneezing, kissing, etc.).

The information provided is only a recommendation. Be aware of and follow your school or district guidelines for returning to school and returning to school. Please refer to CDC.gov for an updated list of symptoms.

For more tips and expert advice, visit Strong4Life.com/reopening.

Screening Checklist

Parents can use this checklist to screen children for symptoms of illness such as COVID-19. The checklist is in English on the front and Spanish on the back.

Going back to school safely

- Give yourself plenty of time to get through the screening checklist before you leave so no one feels rushed.
- Use the same thermometer on the same spot each day for consistency. Any type of thermometer will do, but if you take their temperature orally (by mouth), make sure they don't eat or drink anything 15 minutes prior.
- Introduce your child to mask-wearing as early as possible and practice at home.
- Remind your child to wash their hands frequently, and make it a part of your daily routine.
VIDEOS
videos to help Kids practice healthy habits
HEALTHY HABITS

Watch this playlist to help students learn about healthy habits from the Strong4Life Challenge Team.
COPING SKILLS

Watch [this playlist](#) to practice coping skills with the Strong4Life Challenge Team.
BRAIN BREAKS

Take quick brain breaks throughout the day with the Strong4Life Challenge Team with this playlist.
SHAREABLES
share on your school's social media and in your newsletters
Our friends at @Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life have developed a variety of resources for parents and school staff to support kids going back to school. Learn more: Strong4Life.com/backtoschool.
Any day is a great day to thank your child’s school nurse. When kids have support for their physical well-being, they are better equipped for academic success. And school nurses play a critical role in keeping kids safe and healthy. We are grateful for these healthcare heroes and all that they do!
ARTICLES

find relevant content on Strong4Life.com
IN THE CLASSROOM
With Kids coming back to school after more than a year of uncertainty and atypical school environments, your students may require more patience and compassion from you than ever before. There is no textbook to follow or one right way to respond; however, there are things you can do to encourage positive behavior in the youth you are working with.
When kids are struggling, they often show us with their behavior. Even if it seems like they’re trying to frustrate you, they’re just showing you that they’re having a hard time. You can help your students by responding in positive ways.
TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS

There are so many things out of our control right now, but one thing you can control is communication with your students. It’s natural to want to shield kids from fear, but Kids are affected by what is happening around them whether we acknowledge it or not, and not acknowledging it can cause more harm than good.
This school year will be full of changes in policies and protocols to ensure the safety of both staff and students. Get ideas to effectively manage these changes in your classroom.
Making the Most of Mealtime in the Classroom

If your school is moving meals into the classroom, it could be a great opportunity to build relationships with students. Help make mealtimes a positive experience with these 5 tips.
YOUR WELL-BEING
The challenges facing educators are enormous right now, making it more difficult to prioritize your own needs. That’s why it’s critical that you are intentional and carve out “me” time each day, if only for a few minutes. It’s important for both your emotional and physical wellness.
As a leader, you're an important source of guidance and support for your school community. We are sharing some tips to help you navigate this challenging time while taking care of your needs and your staff’s.
Quick Tips for Eating Smarter and Hydrating

Fueling your body with smart foods and drinks will help keep your brain focused, body energized and immune system strong. Follow these quick tips to make smart choices simple.
TIPS FOR PARENTS
10 WAYS TO ENCOURAGE
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

None of us has been through something like this before, so there is no textbook to follow or one right way to parent in the current environment. However, there are things you can do to improve your family dynamic, make your day-to-day a little smoother and make parenting more enjoyable.
HOW STRESS CAN LEAD TO CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

Not only have our lives suddenly changed, but our kids’ lives have changed too. It’s normal for stress to lead to changes in behavior, and our kids need our help to get through it.
POSITIVE PARENTING FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Taking a positive approach to discipline (positive parenting) is about teaching your kids rather than simply punishing them. It does not mean you are completely hands-off or that you allow them to do whatever they want. The difference is that when you react to challenging behavior, you keep your focus on providing clear expectations and guidance.
Taking care of yourself (the parent or caregiver)

Regardless of your unique situation, it’s critical that you are intentional and carve out “me” time each day, if only for a few minutes. It’s important for both your mental and physical wellness.