



Return to on-site schooling for teenagers with neurodevelopmental disabilities

Information for families

Consistent routines and additional supports can support teens with neurodevelopmental disabilities when they return to school. AllPlay Learn have created home schedules, school stories, emotions cards and many other resources to support the return of students to school. To view these resources and other helpful information, visit allplaylearn.org.au/covid-support

Teens with neurodevelopmental disabilities may benefit from consistent routines and structure when transitioning back to school.

- **Establish consistent routines and structure.** As much as possible, try to provide your child with a consistent home routine. Knowing what to expect at home will help give your child a sense of stability and security.
- **Clearly communicate any new routines and rules.** Short and clear instructions that are repeated are best. Consider modelling new routines and rules, providing visual reminders (such as posters), and lots of prompts.
- **Consider which changes could be a trigger.** Changes such as a different teacher or new ways of doing things could cause anxiety or meltdowns. Communicate about these changes to your child well before they occur and provide additional support where needed.

Teens with neurodevelopmental disabilities may be unsettled by the changes in their normal school routine.

- **Some students may experience anxiety or school refusal.** Providing a clear routine at the start of the day, and talk to your child's school about available support, including from the student wellbeing team.
- **Provide a safe space before and after school.** Your child may be more emotional or anxious before and after school. Provide a safe space for them to express their emotions, and strategies to wind down.
- **Consider how you can support emotion regulation.** Some strategies that can help include modelling positive coping, using emotion cards or other tools to talk about emotions, and providing warmth and support. Promote fun and relaxing activities that your child can engage in at home to assist in managing stress associated with the transition back to school.
- **Establish a bedtime routine.** You may have noticed with changes in daily routine, that your child's sleep patterns may have been disrupted. At a time when students are transitioning back to school it is important to establish a bedtime routine and ensure good sleep hygiene habits are established. Please see our sleep resources to assist you in establishing a bedtime routine.
- **Consider your own wellbeing as best as possible.** This has been a difficult time for many Australians. Some ways you can look after your own wellbeing can be found [here](#).