Getting Ready For School: Managing Emotions and Expectations

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Top 10 Biggest Issues

1. Kids are not getting what they need. Many weak links were exposed.
2. Kids did not receive sufficient direct instruction
3. Low expectations from March-June
4. Schools were not all responsive
5. Teachers were overwhelmed and untrained
Top 10 Biggest Issues

6. Schools did not engage in testing. Kids were not evaluated which led to delays in IEP eligibility and delays in updated services.

7. Parents became teachers while working and/or caretaking (the ultimate multi-taskers). Parent burnout is real.

8. Too many kids were remote learning dropouts either because of limited accountability or insufficient access. WiFi should be considered an essential utility (like heat and water).

9. Too many kids were unmotivated, especially by May/June

10. Social isolation in learning has an impact on progress
How to get more of what your child needs from your school by building bridges:

- **Empowering parents as active participants in creating lasting change**
- **SEPAC**
- Relationships with individual teachers
- Write a “wiki” page about your child
- Increased avenues for communication with schools. For example, every school should have a hot line for parents, teachers, or students to call if they need help.
- Work with PTO or school to advocate for teacher training and mentoring in remote learning and other solution-driven strategies
Managing Expectations

- Most likely a combination of remote and onsite learning – each district will decide on their own path depending on community infection rates.

- “Centers” model:
  - Small groups with teacher
  - Online assignments
  - Prerecorded lessons

- Advocate for data disclosures. Many schools will assess skills in the Fall. Find out the “lost learning effect” and social-emotional stressors for your child and classmates. Work with your teachers to target lost skills.
Seamless Learning Centers
Two “centers” for each lesson

In School lessons
- Teacher directed lesson
- Guided practice

Computer lessons
- Practice through activities
- Pre-recorded videos and check-ins with teaching staff

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Tips for Helping Kids Manage

- Developmentally appropriate conversations with factual information will decrease confusion and validate feelings
- Back to school transition plan
- Anchors of normalcy
- Flexible schedules
- Predictability and familiarity decrease anxiety
- Put guilt in quarantine
- Picture journals, Bubble Gum relaxation, books
- Set up a “school office” in your home
Tips for Helping Kids Manage

- Masks protect us and keep us healthy (and give kids a sense of control)
- Shrink the pond (shrink your daily goals, oversimplify)
- Behavior is communication
- Virtual or socially distant study buddy
- Ask teachers for group projects
- Self-care
- Recognize success

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Developing a Transition Plan For Your Child

- Focus on social and emotional issues
- Talk about anticipatory anxiety and worries that schools will close without notice
- Daily “getting ready for school plan” with specific activities depending on the age of your child (e.g. Contact teacher, drive by school, buy notebooks and supplies)
Silver Linings

- Building resiliency and adaptability (Resiliency=Coping with Adversity + Time)
- Building flexibility
- Building a sense of community (within and outside of school)
- Building industriousness
- Building creativity
- Building family relationships
- Building critical thinking
- Building a sense of fairness and justice
Thank You
Q & A