

BACK TO SCHOOL, ONE STEP AT A TIME

20 Practical Strategies for a Smoother, Safer Return

FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER A DIFFICULT YEAR

Start where your child needs the most support — you don't have to do all 20.



01 RESTART THE ROUTINE  Start at least a week before school begins	02 PRACTICE THE BUS RIDE  Find out the route and practice it	03 VISIT BEFORE DAY ONE  Look for possible triggers	04 MAKE THE DAY VISUAL  Use visual schedules & First/Then boards	05 CREATE A SCHOOL STORY  Prepare for what might happen in school
06 INTRODUCE YOUR CHILD  Prepare a 'Get to Know my Child' sheet	07 LEARN FROM LAST YEAR  Identify barriers from previous year	08 PLAN FOR HARD MOMENTS  Create a clear plan for overwhelm	09 FIND A SAFE ADULT  Identify someone your child can go to	10 PACK SENSORY SUPPORTS  Prepare tools to manage overload
11 PRACTICE SEEKING HELP  Practice words, cards or signals to seek help	12 PREPARE FOR CHANGES  Teach strategies to cope with change	13 START SMALL  Set realistic goals and build from there	14 PROTECT RECOVERY TIME  Allow to decompress after school	15 AGREE HOW TO COMMUNICATE  Discuss home-school communication
16 TELL STAFF WHAT WORKS  Share triggers & strategies	17 LISTEN TO THE BEHAVIOR  What is your child communicating?	18 ADAPT RETURN TO YOUR CHILD  Consider a staggered return	19 REVIEW IEP & SUPPORTS  Check it is up to date & understood	20 CONNECTION & SAFETY FIRST  Safe, connected, ready to learn

The goal isn't a perfect first day
It's helping your child to feel safe enough to take the next step

If you need more help or information, reach out to the **Parent Training & Information Center** at Putnam Independent Living Services
845.228.7457 or [PTIC](#)

