



# Psychotherapy and Life Coaching

for Children, Teens, and Women

## Back-to-School Blues

[www.psychotherapyandlifecoaching.com](http://www.psychotherapyandlifecoaching.com)

### Visualize

Imagine if you had to start a new job each of the next 13 years. Each year, the expectations and responsibilities change. The location of your job changes every few years. Most years, you get a new boss, but some years you have the same boss, even if you aren't sure that boss likes you. There are several years when you have multiple bosses, all with different styles. They may not communicate with each other, so that there are times when many of them need completed projects all at the same time. Your co-workers also

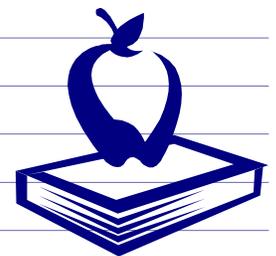
change to some degree each year and, later on, throughout the day. You may have co-workers who are bullies, but you usually cannot quit or change jobs. You receive fairly frequent feedback about your performance, as in reviews every 6-9 weeks, sometimes more frequently, and letter grades on each work assignment.

Are you sweating yet? Do your palms feel cold and clammy?

### How Our Children May Feel

Is it any wonder our kids, at any age, get stressed when school starts? Yet,

very few young people talk about being stressed and may think they are the only ones feeling stressed. Most kids are not aware or simply do not have the vocabulary to describe what they are experiencing. Children will often act out emotions that they do not understand. They may have more difficulty listening and following directions. You may notice more sibling squabbles, or peer interactions may sour more quickly than usual. They may become more hyperactive (e.g. talking nonstop) or less energetic (e.g. quiet and thoughtful) than



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## Talk to your children about the upcoming experiences and changes

usual. Their behavior may be affected in more subtle ways. They may have difficulty going to sleep or staying asleep. There may be changes in appetite, increased or decreased.

At times, kids' behavior may regress. This is the time of year more children try to sleep with mom and dad or have bad or troublesome dreams. The "lovey," which, depending on their age, can range from a stuffed animal to a favorite shirt to a cell phone, may be needed more now.



### How You Can Help

- ◆ Talk to your children about the upcoming experiences and changes
- ◆ Share your own apprehension when you started school as a

kid or when starting something new or making changes more recently

- ◆ Help your kids to have the vocabulary and to verbalize how they are feeling
- ◆ Keep as many things the same or at least predictable as possible (e.g. "I will be here when you get off the bus every day.")
- ◆ Because kids often see the start of school as the end of summer, plan on a trip to the pool or park the weekend or two weekends after school starts (i.e. the fun is **not** over!)
- ◆ Give your child a transitional object to ease their transition from summer or being at home to school (e.g. give your child your special seashell necklace to wear to school to have a piece of you or summer with them at school)
- ◆ Remind them of all of the coping skills they

have to handle the upcoming experiences or changes:

- ⇒ Deep breathing to calm themselves
- ⇒ Teachers and family to support and help them
- ⇒ Drawing pictures or journaling to express feelings
- ⇒ Listening to, playing, or singing to music
- ⇒ How they handled changes last year or the last time (e.g. "Remember, last year when we visited the teacher/class/school ahead of time, you said that helped a lot.")

Although it isn't usually a formal part of education, all of our children need to LEARN how to manage stress. Let's give them the best chance for a good grade!

