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WHILE many children are excited for the start of a new academic year, there are those who may have increased levels of fear or anxiety. What can you do to help ease these feelings? Begin by talking to your child. Allow him/her to express their feelings without reassuring them that bad things will not happen. Encourage your child to think of possible solutions for dealing with certain imagined situations, but be sure to focus on what they are excited about for the new year.

Whether your child will be attending a new school or not, it may be helpful to set a time to visit the school prior to the first day; meeting the teacher may also be a possibility. A few days before the start of school, create and implement a school-day routine for waking up, eating and going to bed. This will ensure that your child is getting the rest and nutrition he/she needs while helping the entire family adjust to the anticipated schedule. Be sure to keep open communication with the teacher. If your child continues to experience fear and/or anxiety after the first few weeks of school, be sure to contact your family pediatrician.