



2026

Back-to-School Anxiety

5 More Evidence-Based Ways to Help
Your Child Feel Calm and Confident

A free guide from Blue Bolt Pediatric Care

BLUEBOLTPEDIATRICCARE.COM

School mornings don't have to feel this stressful.

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Understanding This Guide

If your child cries before school, complains of stomachaches, refuses to get dressed, or seems unusually worried, you're not alone.

Anxiety often shows up through behavior before children can explain how they're feeling.

Here are five additional evidence-based strategies you can start using today.

1. Create a Predictable Morning Routine

Children feel safer when they know what's coming next.

Instead of constantly giving reminders, use the same sequence every morning.



Example:

01.

Wake up

02.

Get dressed



03.

Eat breakfast

04.

Brush teeth

05.

Backpack

06.

Shoes

07.

Leave

Visual schedules often work even better than verbal reminders because children don't have to remember multiple directions.

Try this today: Keep the routine exactly the same every morning for the first few weeks of school.

2. Practice Calm Before They Need It



Deep breathing usually doesn't work when a child is already overwhelmed, unless they know how to do it already.

Practice calming strategies while they're already relaxed.

Ideas:

01. Bubble breaths

Pretend you're blowing a giant bubble by taking a slow deep breath in through your nose and gently blowing out through your mouth.

03. Smell the flower, blow out the candle

Take a slow breath in as if you're smelling a flower, then slowly breathe out as if you're blowing out a candle.

02. Slow counting

Slowly count to 10 while taking calm breaths to give your mind and body time to settle.

04. Progressive muscle relaxation

Tighten one group of muscles (like your hands or shoulders) for a few seconds, then relax them to help your body feel calm.

The more they practice when calm, the easier it becomes during stressful moments.

3. Give Small Choices

Anxiety often increases when children feel like everything is happening to them.

Offer simple choices that don't change the expectation.

Examples:

Blue shirt or green shirt?

Backpack first or shoes first?

Walk to the car or skip to the car?



Small choices increase cooperation without creating negotiations.



4. Focus on What They'll Do After School

Many children only think about the scary part of the day.

Help them picture the entire day.



Instead of saying:

"Don't worry."

Try:

"After school we're going to stop at the park."

Or:

"I can't wait to hear about the funniest thing that happened today."



This helps shift attention toward what comes next instead of staying stuck on the anxiety.

5. Praise Brave Behavior

Confidence grows after children practice doing hard things.
Instead of praising outcomes, praise effort.



Examples:

"You walked into school even though you felt nervous."

"You kept trying."

"That took courage."



This teaches children that bravery doesn't mean feeling fearless.

It means doing hard things anyway.

Remember...

Your child doesn't need to stop feeling anxious before they can be successful.

With patience, consistency, and practice, most children become more confident over time.

Progress is built one small success at a time.

Need More Personalized Support?

If school mornings are turning into daily battles, you don't have to figure it out alone.



Blue Bolt Pediatric Care provides virtual parent coaching using practical, evidence-based behavior strategies that fit into real family life.

Whether you're navigating school anxiety, tantrums, transitions, potty training, or challenging behaviors, we're here to help.

Schedule your free consultation today.

