Ohio's Project AWARE

Back to School: Ready or Not, Here it Comes!

August means back to school for most Ohio school-aged children and adolescents. For many children, this can be an exciting time, but for others — particularly those with mental health issues — it can be stressful or overwhelming. Below are a few tips for families and teachers to ease the transition back.

Families	Teachers
♦ Re-establish routines for bedtime, mealtimes, and screen time. Ensure your child is well-rested and nourished. ♦ Get acquainted with the school and/or classroom. Read information sent home, attend open houses, and consider visiting the building before school starts. ♦ Communicate with your child about any concerns he/she has about the upcoming school year. Using open-ended questions, check in with your child often about how school is going.	♦ Communicate with families and students before the start of the school year to welcome them and convey important information about preparing for the year. ♦ Set a warm, welcoming , safe, and organized environment for students on the first day. ♦ Spend time acquainting students with the classroom/ building, the schedule, each other, and yourself. Give extra attention to students who seem nervous or uncomfortable the first few days.
If a child's stress about school continues beyond the first few weeks, or seems to go above and beyond normal anxiety about returning to school, talk to the child's teacher, parent, and/or a mental health professional. *****Also, see attached Back to School Checklist for parents/advocates of children with mental health needs*****	

Trauma-Informed Care

(see attached information brief)

Unfortunately, some children and adolescents will be returning to school having been exposed to trauma. Educators play an important role in fostering resilience by ensuring a supportive learning environment for these students. **Trauma Informed Care (TIC)** is a framework for service delivery that recognizes and responds to the influence of trauma . ***Please read and share the attached information brief to learn more about Trauma-Informed Care.***

In addition to the resources provided in the attached information brief, this new toolkit includes invaluable resources and information for Ohio schools looking to provide trauma-informed services:
Addressing children's trauma: A toolkit for Ohio schools http://www.cdfohio.org/research-library/addressing-childrens-trauma.html?utm_source=trauma-july2015&utm_campaign=eNews%209-15-14&utm_medium=email

Ohio's Project AWARE team includes partners in 3 county Educational Service Centers.
If you are from those local areas and want more information about Project AWARE services, please contact:
Cuyahoga County ESC: Mary Wise; (216) 901-4201; mary.wise@esc-cc.org
Warren County ESC: Vycki Haught; (513) 379-2310; vycki.haught@warrencountyesc.com
Wood County ESC: Angela Patchen; (419) 354-9010 x228; apatchen@wcesc.org

For information about Project AWARE in other regions of the state, please contact:
Emily Jordan: emily.jordan@education.ohio.gov

Stay tuned for our next email blast during Suicide Prevention Week, September 6-12, 2015!