# PARENT/ADVOCATE BACK TO SCHOOL CHECKLIST

If your child has a mental health condition, are you both ready for school?

Providing support and guidance for a child with a mental health condition is a critical part of recovery. As a parent/caregiver, it is important that you work towards providing your child with the best school environment that is possible. To do so, it is important to be prepared for the upcoming school year.

Here's Mental Health America's 8-Point Back-to-School Checklist to help you and your child be ready!

## Tasks

- ☐ I have made sure my child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) is updated, and all the modifications and accommodations are in an easy-to-reference place for everyone to see.
- ☐ I have communicated with the regular teacher, special education teacher, principal, school psychologist, guidance counselor and/or anyone else helping to manage my child's program to make sure they're aware of his/her needs and the accommodations/modifications the school has agreed to.
- ☐ I have introduced myself to my child's teacher(s), to make sure the teacher(s) (including PE, art, music, etc.) is/are aware of how my child's mental health condition might manifest itself in the classroom, is on board with any IEP modifications and accommodations, and has had an opportunity to express any concerns or questions to me.
- ☐ I have made sure that my child will have some positive social interactions at school, such as participating in a sport or after-school activity.
- ☐ I have talked to my child about bullying, both so they don't get bullied and so they don't bully others.
- ☐ I have talked to my child about how s/he wants to talk about their mental health condition with adults and/or peers, so that they can find a comfortable, non-scary way (for them or others) of explaining how they might be different and how they are just like everyone else.
- ☐ My child and I have worked out a strategy for "bad days" (when they might be able to stay home, when they should go to the nurse's office before a situation escalates, etc.) and I have communicated this strategy to school officials.
- ☐ If my child takes medication during the day, I have made sure that my child knows where to go to take it (such as a school nurse's office), have completed all necessary paperwork, that a trusted adult in the school is aware of this, and school personnel are also aware of any side effects my child might experience from the medication?


For more information, contact Mental Health America at

MHA Mental Health America

1-800-969-6MHA

or visit our website at www.mentalhealthamerica.net

## Other Resources

Additional information and resources for you and your child as the school year progresses can be found from the following organizations and websites:

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Website: http://www.aacap.org
Phone: 202-966-7300

American Academy of Pediatrics: Health, Mental Health and Safety Guidelines for Schools
Website: http://www.nationalguidelines.org
Phone: 1- 800-433-9016

Center for Parent Information and Resources: Mental Health
Website: http://www.parentcenterhub.org/topics/mental-health

Healthychildren.org: Administering Medication at Child Care or School
Website: http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/medication-safety/Pages/Administering-Medication-at-Child-Care-or-School.aspx
Email: info@healthychildren.org
Phone: 1-847-434-4000

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Website: http://www.ffcmh.org/
Phone: 240-403-1901
Email: ffcmh@ffcmh.org

National PTA: Emotional Health
Website: http://www.pta.org/emotionalhealth
Phone: 1-800-307-4782
Email: info@pta.org

U.S. Department of Education: A Guide to the Individualized Education Program
Website: http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html

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