



Let's talk  
about what  
you could do  
about that

## Changing challenges to opportunities to learn

The beginning of the school year always brings with it changes and with that challenges.

Changes can cause anxiety for children as well as for parents. Sometimes children are disappointed at the beginning of the school year when they are separated from close friends or are allocated a teacher they aren't familiar with. As parents we often get drawn into fixing things for them, however changes and challenges are not all bad and is can be an opportunity for them to use their social skills and develop new relationship.

**So how do we as parents go about doing this without downplaying the difficulty of these changes for your child or stepping in to 'fix' it?**

- Name the feeling the child is experiencing (is it disappointment, fear, anxiety, unsettledness, loneliness or something else?)
- Normalise that feeling and let the child know that people often have those feelings when things are unfamiliar and changing.
- Give the child some space to think about how they might work through the issue themselves (How would they problem solve that issue?)
- Help the child identify what they would like to work on to manage the situation better and help them break it down into small manageable tasks
- Plan for setbacks. Talk through the things that could *possibly* go wrong and how they could handle it "What would you do if ..?"
- Check-in periodically by asking your child about how they are practicing skills, what worked and what they found challenging .... But not too often.
- Let other significant people know that your child is working on a particular social skill so they can 'notice' and help celebrate successes.

**Parent Line NSW**

**1300 1300 52**

[www.parentline.org.au](http://www.parentline.org.au)



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