

School Start Up: New Friends, Active Learning, Unlimited Potential, and... Stress

The beginning of the school year is an iconic part of the annual calendar. From new classes to new clothes to re-discovering routines that have faded over the summer, there is plenty going on, most of it good and some of it a bit daunting. As parents and educators get ready for the bell to ring, they often reach out for resources to help them help their students and families. Here are a couple that may be of interest.

The Psychology Foundation of Canada has developed a series called “Kids Have Stress Too,” <http://bit.ly/1O0PHDf> a resource that acknowledges that while stress is normal, many kids don’t have the life experiences or support systems to deal productively with what is stressing them. Overwhelming stress - whether the result of a single traumatic stressor or a barrage of stressors coming all at once - debilitates the youngster. Their capacity to return to a more balanced, productive state (calm, focused and alert) often depends on the adults in their lives to help them re-establish an equilibrium. The “Kids Have Stress Too” series of webinars is a good refresher for parents, early childhood educators and teachers as we open the doors to another school year.

Another new resource that supports children and the adults in their lives is *What if I...* by author Mary-Catherine Bailey-McKenna. Her engaging and attractively illustrated book is the second in a series and supports emotional and social skill development, recognition of some of the common stressors in kids’ lives, and tips to break the cycle. In addition to being an author, Mary-Catherine is a psychologist who works in private and public settings including schools. She is also a webinar presenter for CSRI on a growing range of topics.