

### **Lessen anxieties about returning to normal...**

A more open economy is fast approaching, and for those members with children or young adults pursuing education and training opportunities, there may be some anxiety about returning to normal. Studies show that in-person learning is how children and teens learn best, but safe, in person learning becomes more challenging when facing new COVID variants, mask guidance, and vaccine eligibility.

There are some silver linings on the horizon. The FDA is preparing to provide full approval for the Pfizer COVID vaccine by early September, just in time for the start of the fall 2021 school year. Full FDA vaccine approval may have the strongest impact on children returning to in-person learning this year, ending social isolation and academic decline. [The U.S. Department of Education](#), released a “Return to School Roadmap” to provide additional resources to support students, schools, educators, and communities for a safe and sustained return for the 2021-2022 school year.

While getting back to pre-pandemic school is a big step in the right direction, some children might have anxiety or stress about transitioning from virtual to in-class learning. [Very Well Family](#) suggests parents can help their children cope with big changes by recognizing the signs of anxiety and implementing creative strategies to overcome stressful situations.

Amy Morin, author of *13 things Mentally Strong People Don't Do*, states that the effect of financial stress is one of the leading causes of mental health and anxiety issues. Though credit unions are not a substitute for medical experts and treatment when it comes to mental health, depression, or anxiety, the services, and solutions that you offer your members can mitigate financial stressors that can complicate overall well-being.

One way credit unions can mitigate financial stress is through Shared Branching. Not having convenient access to funds or critical transactions, like making a timely payment, can be a stressful situation. Shared Branching offers members the peace of mind of having account access wherever they are when they need it most. Check out more by visiting [www.sharedbranching.org](http://www.sharedbranching.org).

### **Learn to recognize stress and anxiety**

Are your kids nervous about returning to the classroom after more than a year of uncertainty? Learn to recognize stress and anxiety in your children and help them transition with these helpful tips from [Very Well Family](#):

1. **Be positive** – There is more to school than learning new things. Remind kids how much fun school can be. Remain positive when talking about all the friends and teachers they may not have seen in a long time, as well as extracurricular activities they can participate in.
2. **Remind them they are not alone** – While your children might be nervous about going back to school, assure them that they are not the only ones; most kids are in the same boat. They have all experienced the same crazy, unorthodox year together. If possible, arrange playdates so kids can reconnect with friends before school officially starts.

3. **Be present those first few weeks** – Try to stay present with your kids during the first days and weeks after school starts. Let them know you are there for them every step of the way, especially in the hours when you both are home from school and work.
4. **Stay healthy** – Keep kids healthy by making sure they are eating and sleeping well, along with getting enough exercise. Find stress relievers for your kids to blow off steam, like sports or activities outside of school.
5. **Know when to get outside help** – You know your child best, so listen to your gut and seek professional help if you feel their anxiety is something more deeply rooted than back-to-school stress.

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