

AP-OD Family Connections

Message from AP-OD

Back to school season is here. Whether your child is starting daycare for the first time, returning to school, or adjusting to a new classroom or learning environment, this is a season full of big feelings and new beginnings for the whole family.

Transitions like these can bring excitement, nerves, and everything in between for both children and parents, and that is completely normal. What matters most is that children know they are supported every step of the way. Your calm presence, your encouragement, and your love are the foundation that gives them the confidence to walk through that door.

In this issue, we are sharing practical tips for smoother mornings, tools for easing school and daycare anxiety, and curated back-to-school book lists to help your child process this new chapter. We are also honored to share Karina's story, a mother determined to build a better future for her children, reminding us of the hope and strength within our community.



AP-OD Parent Spotlight



A New Beginning

In 2024, Karina packed up her life in Chile and moved to Michigan with her two children. She arrived in a new country, with a new language, a new climate, and a new school for her kids. In this short time, she has built a life she is deeply proud of, including a home, a car, a job, and two children who are thriving in school.

"I am proud of what I have accomplished in such a short amount of time," she says.

Like many immigrant families, Karina has also faced fear and uncertainty. But through it all, her focus remains unwavering, centered on protecting her children, nurturing their confidence, and building toward their future. Karina shares,



My focus is to work hard to the point that I can say: it doesn't matter how tired I am, it all is worth it — because tomorrow there will be fruits, and those fruits will be the future of my children.

Read her full story: [Immigrating for a Better Future](#)

Karina's story is featured in the [2026 National Latino Family Report](#), part of the [Latino Infant Initiative](#).

Explore the [2026 National Latino Family Report](#), part of the [Latino Infant Initiative](#), in English and in Spanish:



Explore the report in English



Explore the report in Spanish

Tip of the Month



Ready, Set, School!

Back to school season is here and whether your little one is starting daycare for the first time, heading to preschool, or stepping into kindergarten, transitions like these are big moments for the whole family. It's completely normal for both children and parents to feel a mixture of emotions.

The good news is you already have everything it takes to help your child feel safe, confident, and ready for this exciting milestone. Here are some resources to help you navigate this season of transitions together.

Blog post



Easing the Transition: Helping Your Child with School & Daycare Anxiety

Starting school or childcare is a big milestone, and separation anxiety is experienced by many young children, particularly between 18 months and 3 years of age. In this blog, licensed therapist Silvia Esqueda, M.S., LMFT, shares some helpful tips, including validating your child's feelings, teaching simple breathing techniques, role-playing at home, and building a consistent routine.

[Read the full AP-OD blog: Easing the Transition](#)

Blog post



Smoother School Mornings: Tips from AP-OD Parents

Members of AP-OD's National Parent and Caregiver Co-creation Advisory Group shared their tried-and-true strategies for calmer, more joyful mornings — from prepping the night before to starting the day with music and positivity. Every family is different, and the best routine is the one that works for yours. We hope these suggestions give you a few ideas to make your mornings a little easier.

[Read the full AP-OD blog: Smoother School Mornings](#)

Tip of the Month



Stories to Read Together This Back-to-School Season

Books are one of the most powerful tools for helping children process new experiences and big feelings. Here are three curated book lists from Random House Children's Books to explore with your little one:



School Stories for Young Readers — relatable, engaging stories for every stage



Books for Big Feelings — perfect for helping little ones name and navigate emotions



Back to School Favorites — essential reads for students of all ages

Don't forget your local library is also a great free resource for all of these titles and more!

Transitions take time, and every child moves at their own pace. Your calm, consistent presence can help give your child the courage they need during this season of new beginnings.

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Upcoming Events and Workshops



We're excited to share more webinars and events with you soon.

In the meantime, we invite you to download the [AP-OD Family App](#). The [AP-OD Family App](#) is your go-to resource for local family events from our partners — available anytime, anywhere, and completely free.

Download the AP-OD Family App



Community Building

In Their Shoes

Do you remember your first day of school? Take a moment to think back. What happened? How did you feel walking through those doors for the very first time? Were you excited, nervous, or maybe a little of both?

Remembering our own experiences can help us better understand what our children might be feeling as they start a new school year, begin daycare, or take that big first step into kindergarten.

This month, we're inviting you to share with our community: "One memory I have from my first day of school is ____."

Share on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) and tag us @AP_OD_National. Your story could encourage another parent or remind them they aren't alone as they begin this new school year.

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Saying "Knowledge is Power."