



## School Psych Newsletter

August, 2016

So here we are at the start of another school year! The School Psychologists pulled some new information for students and parents to help make starting back to school a little easier- especially for transitioning students.

We also want to take a moment to introduce our school district's own dedicated Occupational Therapist- Ericson Reyes! Check out his tips listed below for getting the right student back pack for your child! We are excited to have an OT specialist in our district and we look forward to sharing more information with you throughout the school year!

We hope you have a great school year here at Silver Valley Unified School District and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We can be reached by calling our school district's main office and asking the receptionist to transfer you to the School Psychologist's offices.

Cheri Rigdon- School Psychologist  
Maxine Huntington- School Psychologist

## 15 Ways to Make Friends at a New School



1. Be friendly.
2. Be interested in others.
3. Get involved.
4. Be yourself.
5. Be confident.
6. Be trustworthy.
7. Be kind.
8. Seek out others who treat you with respect.
9. Avoid peer pressure.
10. Make acquaintances first.
11. Invite yourself to sit with someone else at lunch.
12. Ask for help.
13. Talk to a parent, teacher or counselor.
14. Talk yourself into confidence.
15. Keep trying.

## Things to consider in buying a Backpack for your child.

1. According to the experts, a child wearing a backpack incorrectly or that is too heavy can be contributing risk factors for discomfort, fatigue, muscle soreness, and musculoskeletal pain especially in the lower back.
2. The height of the backpack should extend from approximately 2 inches below the shoulder blades to waist level, or slightly above the waist.
3. Look for backpacks with well-padded shoulder straps that can be worn on both shoulders so when packed with books, the weight can be evenly balanced by the student.
4. Backpacks with a hip or chest belt take some strain off sensitive neck and shoulder muscles and improve the student's balance.
5. Experts say it is important to try on backpacks, just as your child will try on clothes and shoes when back-to-school shopping.

Ericson Reyes, M.A.Ed. OTR/L  
District Occupational Therapist





# When You're the New Kid in School

By Marie Hartwell-Walker, Ed.D.

~ 4 min read



*"So what's your name new kid in school, tell me something do you feel lonely"— Song lyrics by The Donnas*

Here comes September. You've been bracing yourself all summer. Here it is, the middle of your middle school or high school career and your folks have moved you halfway across the country – away from friends, away from your routines and teams and activities, away from all that's familiar. Admit it. It's kind of scary. Even if you're cool, it's still nervous-making. What's the new school going to be like? Will the kids like you? Will you fit in? Will you like the teachers? Will they like you? OMG! There's too much to think about! I can't blame you a bit if you want to roll over and sleep. Yeah. But avoiding it won't help you deal with the inevitable first day. Even if you avoid the first day, there will be your first day. Going late will only make you more visible and obviously new. Might as well take a deep breath and figure out how to deal. Here are some tips that just might help you ease into your new school.

1. Remember that the new place will give you a new chance. For at least the first day, you're exotic. Especially in a school where there isn't much coming and going, you're someone special. Yes, it's true you left what is familiar. But the new place is also a new opportunity. Nobody knows who you are, who you hung out with, or what to expect from you. If you didn't quite like who you are or the reputation you had, you have a chance to start over. If you did like it, you can take that confidence with you and make a big splash.
2. Get oriented. If at all possible, visit the school before school starts. It's hard enough to start over without also getting lost all the time. Ask your folks to arrange a tour. Figure out where the principal's office is and how to get to the library. Ask for a map of the layout of the school. No time for this? Well, asking for directions is one way to begin to get to know people.
3. Do a little research. Get on the Internet and find out about the school. There's probably a website. If there isn't one for the school, look for the town's site. You can find out about sports teams and events. You can learn what clubs are active and how the teams are doing. You can even check out what is usually served for lunch.
4. Take the time to assess. When you're lonely, it's tempting to grab onto whoever grabs you. But you want to take the time to look things over and figure out who's who. As you know, as soon as you start hanging with a particular group, it will be hard to change your mind.
5. Dress for the group you want to join. For most teens, clothes are code for who you are. Wear a clean, neat, but kind of neutral outfit the first day. Get up in time to shower and do your hair. Jeans are generally fine as long as they're clean and not flashy. Presenting yourself neutrally the first few days gives you time to figure out the informal rules for dress among the students. Once you've got it down, you can dress to fit in with the group you want to accept you.
6. Avoid cafeteria stress the first day. Pack a lunch so you don't have to stand in line wondering whether to accept someone's invitation to join their table or, worse, to have to walk the long mile in front of everyone to an empty table. Confidently sit on the edge and watch for a few days. Sit in a way that broadcasts confidence. You're not a reject. You're taking the time to think about who you'll choose to be with.
7. Introduce yourself to teachers. First impressions do matter and you want to make a good one. Try to get to classes a bit early or to stay a few minutes after class to introduce yourself and to tell them where you're from. A few minutes of politeness will get things off on the right foot.
8. Join something. A fast way to get to know some people is to join a team, a club, the band, a service organization, or student activities. People who share the same interests are likely your kind of people. Even if you don't make real friends at first, you'll learn some people's names and you'll have a few people to say hi to in the halls.
9. Take charge. Once you've got an idea who you want to meet, it's up to you. Take a deep breath, pull up your big boy or big girl pants and start introducing yourself. Set a goal of meeting at least one new person a day. Say hello to the person who sits next to you in English class. Strike up a conversation with the person who has the locker next to yours. Remember – people like to talk about themselves. Think of a couple of questions you can ask each person and the conversation will take off almost by itself.
10. Keep but don't retreat to old friends. Skype and Facebook and Twitter and texting and email and even the phone can let you stay in touch with old friends. That's all good. But it can also be quicksand. If you let yourself spend hours and hours communicating with old friends, you'll make it less likely that you'll find new ones. By staying so connected to people who live hours away, you might keep yourself lonely in your own backyard.

As tempting as it is to hang on tight to what is familiar, give yourself – and your new community – a fair chance. Spend afterschool time involved with the new. Allow an hour at night for reunions as a reward for getting your assignments done. As hard as it is, this also applies to boyfriends or girlfriends left behind. Give each other permission to see other people and to be fully involved in your own schools. If your romance was meant to be, you'll reconnect in the future.

Feeling uprooted during the teen years can feel unfair and really, really hard. But It's also a chance to reinvent yourself, to expand your network of friends and to enjoy new experiences. With some thought and effort, you can make it work for you.