

Don't pack out the weekend: two-thirds of children say a calm weekend would make them feel better about being back at school

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Nearly two thirds of children (61.7%) say having a calm weekend with their family to look forward to after their first week back would make them feel better about going back to school, new research has found.

Seven in ten parents (69.6%) also say their child needs more downtime than usual during the first week back, while more than two thirds (68.6%) believe knowing they had a calm first weekend together would help their child feel less worried about returning.

The findings come as children across the country make their way through the first full week of the new school year, following weeks of focus on preparing them for the return. But research from children's wellbeing platform Super Chill suggests the adjustment does not necessarily end once children are through the school gates.

More than half of children (53.8%) worry about having new teachers, while 38% worry about not knowing what to expect and more than a third (36.6%) worry about the change in routine. And among children who say they usually feel worried about going back to school, almost four in ten (38.4%) say they feel sad or upset, 37.5% have trouble sleeping and more than a quarter (27.2%) get tummy aches.

Parents are feeling the pressure too.

More than six in ten (62.2%) say they hide their own worries about the new school year from their child, while more than half (54.7%) say they worry about the new school year as much as their child does. Six in ten (60%) say the first week back is the most stressful for them.

In response, Super Chill has launched Soft Landing September, encouraging families to take some of the pressure off while children settle back into school.

And with the first full week now underway, the platform is asking families to make Saturday 12 September a Soft Landing Saturday, leaving a little more breathing space after five full days back rather than feeling pressure to immediately fill the weekend with plans.

The idea is not to cancel everything or create a perfectly calm household, but to recognise that children may need more space than usual while they adjust to early mornings, full school days, new teachers, friendships and routines.

That could mean a slower morning, leaving part of the weekend unscheduled, going for a walk, watching a film together or simply creating an opportunity to ask children how being back at school is actually feeling.

Geert Pelsma, Managing Director of Super Chill, said:

"We spend a lot of time thinking about how children feel before they go back to school, but far less about how they feel once they are actually back.

"What stood out to us in this research is that children themselves are telling us something very simple. Nearly two thirds say having a calm weekend with their family to look forward to would make them feel better about going back.

"At the same time, seven in ten parents believe their child needs more downtime than usual during that first week.

"Settling back into school doesn't necessarily happen the moment a child walks through the gates. For some children, there can still be a lot to process as they get used to new routines, teachers, friendships and expectations.

"Soft Landing September is about recognising that and giving families permission to take a little pressure off.

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“We’re not asking parents to add another thing to the list. If anything, we’re encouraging them to take something off it.”

Soft Landing September is designed to encourage families to create small pockets of breathing space throughout the month as children adjust to being back at school.

Super Chill is a free, ad-free wellbeing platform for children aged 6–12, designed to help children understand how they are feeling and give them simple tools to help manage their emotions.

The app includes emotional check-ins and short exercises around breathing, movement, mindfulness and relaxation that children can use when things feel like a lot.

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