**Idea for helping children and teens in the new school year transition.**

New classrooms, new routines, new teachers and new schedules all make going back to school a little more exciting for kids. Okay, exciting might be overstating it a bit. Perhaps "energizing" is a more apt description.

But just like that new car smell that abruptly fades after your first road trip, the thrill of being back in the classroom wears off quickly too. For some, it's gone in a week. For others, it takes just hours. In its place come all the concerns that summer break had conveniently, if only momentarily, hidden away, like…

* Having a falling out with friends.
* Earning disappointing grades.
* Not winning at something (athletically, artistically or academically).

So when the new academic year gets underway and another cycle of school's ups and downs begins, what can you do when your child hits an emotional low? When kids are feeling sad, overwhelmed or misunderstood, what can be said or done?

A hard truth to accept is that sometimes you may not know how bad your child feels or why. Sometimes, you may not even be around when deep frustrations and disappointments set in. Still, even when you're unaware or unavailable, there's a way to provide support and strength to your child.

## A back-to-school gift

As you gather back-to-school supplies, include an *Uphill Reading* storybook. You won't find it in any bookstore, and it won't cost you much but a few moments of your time.

*Uphill Reading* is a create-it-yourself book you make for your child that contains special images, meaningful mementos and inspiring words. It's something that can be a source of encouragement and help when one's heart needs healing, when one's soul needs soothing or when one's confidence needs lifting.

*Life is filled with ups and downs.*

*When you're going uphill, read this.*

*It will keep your feet on the ground*.

## Cheerful content…

To get you started, here are ideas and inserts you can include in your child's storybook that will fill several pages and, most importantly, remind your child of happier days.

1. **A favorite poem or passage**

Maybe your child wrote a funny limerick or made up a memorable rhyme. A thought-provoking passage or verse from a beloved book works, too!

1. **Feel-good stories about an athlete, artist or musician**

Paste inspirational stories about individuals who overcame challenging circumstances to achieve their goals. Anyone who shares the same interests as your child or who your child admires will make an impression.

1. **Song lyrics**

Write down lyrics by a musician or group your child likes, or pick lyrics your child may not have heard before but have a powerful, positive message.

1. **A Word Cloud like this:**

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Like the book you’re making, a word cloud is a memento that can be looked at again and again when a confidence boost is needed.

1. **Baby stories**

Write details or stories about your child’s birth, such as what happened when he met his older siblings, aunts and uncles, or grandparents. Include other memories he was too young to remember (first words, favorite toy, or most-hated clothes).

1. **Affirmation cards**

Design cards with motivational phrases (“I got this!” and “I have grit!”) and paste them throughout the book.

1. **Photos**

Create collages from snapshots of happy, carefree times.

8. **Unforgettable memory**

Write down a favourite memory you have of your child that he will appreciate or find amusing.

When you’re done compiling feel-good, inspirational material, present the book as a back-to-school gift. As your child thumbs through the pages, say why you made it… as a pick-me-up when life has you feeling sour.

Encourage your child to add more material (ribbons won, certificates earned, etc.) as the school year goes on. Because this is a story with a happy never-ending!

Source: <https://www.boystown.org/blog/Pages/Back-to-School-Gift.aspx>