Patrick:

Now have you started the long process of picking out your drink bottles and lunchboxes for this school year? And what about what you're going to put in the lunchbox?

Well, Belinda Smith is from The Root Cause and is back with some tips to break the culture shock

of back to school lunchboxes.

Good morning, Belinda.

***Belinda:***

***Good morning Patrick. And listeners, I hope you're all well,***

Patrick: We're going fantastic. I can speak for myself. Uh,but what about lunchboxes at this time of year? School holidays are still ongoing, but we are in the backend. Uh, what's, why talk about lunchboxes at this specific time?

***Belinda:***

***Well, I think, uh, I always like to thinkthat the new year is, uh, a great opportunity for us to reset our relationship with lunchboxes. They tend to be a bit of a challenge for a lot of parentsand we also get a lot of, I guess, um, stress around them and sometimes we even feel guilt around them.***

***But I wanted to, I, I guess, uh, share a little conversation that I had with my son today,which other parents might relate to. And I think it's, it's kind of typifies why it's so important that we think about these things before school starts back. So, um, if you think about it, no one really likes change. Um, and it can give us nerves, anxiety, it can affect our sleep. And as we, our kids are going back to school, you know, we've had, it will have been six weeks and in some cases seven***

***and eight for, um, some children that, that going back to school will bring up a lot of things for them. And for my son, he got braces, uh, after school finished. Right. And so when he goes back to school,***

***it will be the first time that he will be really eating in amongst his peers at school with braces. And for anybody who's ever had braces, you can know that eating can be quite a, a challenge and embarrassing.***

Patrick:

It's, it's not fun. No. At times.

***Belinda:***

***I remember that day, my, those days myself. But um, so this morning I had a little chat with him saying, okay mate, let's talk about lunchboxes, you know, like your food for this year. Uh, what veggies would you like from the ones that you like to eat?***

***What would you like in your lunchbox?***

***And last year, pretty much the go-to was carrots.***

***Um, but he said to me, mom, I can't have carrots this year.***

***You know, those no matter how thin you cut them, when I bite in them, they get little bits and then they get stuck in the brackets and I don't wanna be picking 'em out.***

***Yeah. I'm like, okay, okay, well tell me what would you like, you know?***

***And we went through the different kinds of veg that we used to pack and, and the things that he's been having at snacks during the holidays. And he told me when he weeded it down, the ones that he would feel comfortable eating at school were edamame and also cucumber, because they're a bit softer. They're like the centers of them. Yes. Okay, that's great.***

***And I said, okay, let's talk about main lunches. So we typically have our leftovers from dinner and they go in the lunchboxes and the kids have got used to eating them cold. And we have a really interesting conversation today 'cause one of his favorites are when we make our own pizza dough and then, um, load up the, the pizza with uh, you know, different veggies and things.***

***And he said to me, I think I'm off eating cold pizza this year. He could've picked me up off the ground, Patrick,because like he loves, you know, our, our pizzas.***

***So I thought, okay, that's a surprise. If I hadn't have asked him, I probably would've included that.***

***And then he said to me and shepherd's pie, I only really want the mince version a shepherd's pie in my lunchbox, not the lentil one.***

***Okay, okay. That's another surprise.***

***So it just highlights the importance that we engage with our kids around what would they like in their lunchbox. And I wanna stress, it's not like a free for all because if we gave, you know, kids or even us adults a choice, you know, do you want packet of chips or do you want carrot sticks, chips?***

Patrick:

Chippies, yes chippies, absolutely all the time. Chippies a hundred percent.

***Belinda:***

***Yes, exactly. So what we wanna do is give them a range of options***

***and then allow them to choose from those options and those options will actually allow them to take ownership for what's going in there.***

***And I guess that's the kind of thing that, um, we did this morning, like was have that conversation.***

***So at least now both of us have a level, level playing field. When we go back to school, we know what veggies are gonna be that is gonna feel comfortable with, we know what main lunches not to include in their lunchboxes. So this week is a great opportunity for everybody to be having those conversations with their kids.***

Patrick:

Speaking to Belinda Smith from the Root Cause.

And Belinda Yeah, you just leaned on the side of the psychological side of things when it comes to talking about lunchboxes at this time period

where school holidays are still ongoing, but to have the discussion now and, and workshop it and also just get back into the familiarity of a lunchbox, rather than dropping it on the children psychologically, like you said, um, they, they can process that change, uh, on a longer period rather than a sudden culture shock of Yep. Back with the lunchbox. Now gotta figure that out.

***Belinda:***

***A hundred percent. And you know what, Patrick, let's be real. This isn't just a culture shock for our kids. You know, all of a sudden our routines need to become a little bit tighter so that you know, our ship, you know, sales smoothly.***

***So I've got five tips that I would like to share before we wrap up today to help us parents get back into our lunchbox group. Um, or, or just even get back into the school groove to be honest.***

***➡️ The first one is to start to think about what does your morning routine need to look like?***

***So, you know, for me, when I sat down and looked at this, my son needs to be out the door by 7:50 for his bus.***

***So working backwards, what time does he need to be dressed by? What time does he need to have breakfast by, you know, what time do, do we need his school bag to be packed? All of those things. So if we can just get back into what are the times, what are the critical times in the morning of when things need to be done? So that's the first thing.***

***➡️ The second one is to start to retrain our family in those routines. So, you know, like practice at least two or three times before school goes back, practice that morning routine. So, you know, for instance, my son slept until a quarter past seven this morning. Well that's not gonna work when school goes back 'cause it won't give him enough time. So between now and when school goes back, I need to a couple of times get him in that routine of where he's actually up at by six 30 then, you know, dressed, having breakfast, you know, so that we're out the door.***

***And getting out the door I think is important for us to actually practice doing that. So, you know, I'm not saying get dressed in your uniform by any stretch of the imagination that's pushing it a bit too far.***

Patrick:

Oh yeah.

***Belinda:***

***But get, get them dressed in their day clothes and then get out the door like, you know, go for, uh, you know, down the shoot and hoops at the basketball courts or go for a walk on the beach just so that you are out the door at the time that they would have to be at school. So that's the second step, like start to retrain them. Yep.***

***And then***

***➡️ The third one is to actually think about the food they eat in the day, uh,in terms of recess and lunchbox. Like sorry, recess and main lunch.***

***So what are you going to start to feed them for recess and lunch? Have those conversations and at least a few times between now when they go back to school, actually pack the lunchbox and you know, get them involved in that. Start talking about what's going in there. Actually put the food in the lunchbox.***

***And then***

***➡️ The fourth one is get them to eat them at the similar times that they would be at school. Right. So, you know, like what time is their recess bell and lunchtime bell and get them to eat their foods at that time. Again, it's all about minimizing that culture shock of how big the change is gonna be for them.***

Patrick:

Absolutely. Yeah.

***Belinda:***

***➡️ And the very last one is our own mindset. I would really love to encourage us, I do this in all of my programs. It's the very first module that we always cover. We look at how do we actually change the mindset of dreading or, um, you know, feeling like the doing these things becomes a chore or that it's a constant battle reframing those thoughts.***

***So I would love to encourage everybody to start to think about when they pack their lunch boxes for their children, that when their kids open it, imagine your kids opening it and thinking this is an expression of my mum's love or my dad's love, or my nan's love. You know, like, so think about that lunchbox and the food that we pack as an expression of our love as an opportunity that we're helping them be the best version of themselves that they can be at school, like to really help with their learning. And lastly, like really tune into how grateful we are that we get to do this for our kids.***

***Yeah. They're only young for a short space of time and there are some people who, you know, aren't as fortunate as that. They don't get to do those things. So that's kind of, I think those five simple steps are an opportunity for us to reset and, uh, make sure that we have our lunchbox groove back by the time that school goes back as well.***

Patrick:

As long as there's no cold pizza in it, Belinda.

***Belinda:***

***Exactly. I still can't believe that that is, that was a shock for me.***

Patrick:

Oh gee, whizz now I it's each to their own good on, uh, good on the young fella for coming clean and, and being honest and having that discussion with you.

***Belinda:***

**Yeah, definitely. And you know, last of all remember that we all, uh, we're all doing great jobs. We're all turning up every day, rain, hail, or shine. Even if we are not feeling well with ourselves, we still turn up for our kids.  *And just know that you're doing a great job.***

Patrick:

And you're doing a great job coming onto the program each week.

Belinda, thank you for joining us once more and look forward to hearing from you next week as well with more helpful advice and tips.

***Belinda:***

***My pleasure. Good luck everybody. Take care.***

Patrick:

Good on you there. Belinda Smith From The Root Cause. School is approaching soon, the return to school and looking at the lunchboxes, it can be a bit of a daunting task to get back into the swing of things.

And there are options and advice to maybe look at the lunchbox prior to going back to school.

And you had the five tips that Belinda left us there:

1. Look at your morning routine. What does it need to look like? What are the critical times for your child.
2. Retraining the family to get back into those routines. So it's not a sudden change when school day one rolls around for term one.
3. Think about the food they're eating between real for recess. Think about the food they're eating between real for recess and lunch and
4. maybe even try and get the kids to eat that food at those similar times of recess and lunch prior to going back to school.
5. Just think about your own mindset as well. Uh, how to avoid it becoming a chore, enjoying it more. And also just understanding that it's, it's okay to be grateful. Your kids are only young for a certain period of time and there'll come a day where you're not making the lunches for them or recess and you might just miss it. So yeah, they can be the stressful days, but just important to be grateful as well.