

Let your child know how happy you are that s/he is going to be learning new and exciting things.

Encourage your child to tell you about the school day—how s/he felt and what it was like.

Let your child know how much s/he has grown up and how proud you are of her/his accomplishments.

When your new kindergartener starts school you will probably notice an increase in grumpiness, sassiness, whining and other regressions. This is a good time to be especially nurturing and to make sure your child is getting plenty of rest. Change is stressful and tiring. School is hard work. If possible, try not to make other big changes at this time.

Getting a good start in kindergarten is important since the early years in school set the pattern for years to come.



The Parent Line

A Happy Start

Preparing your child for kindergarten



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Starting kindergarten is a big step for many children. Parents can help them feel confident and happy about going to kindergarten by sharing information with them about the kindergarten program. Some tips on helping your child make a smooth adjustment to kindergarten are:

Build your child's confidence... Knowing what will happen lessens fears and anxieties.

Before school closes for the summer, show your child the school he will be attending. Watch children playing on the playground. Talk about how happy they look.

Ask if you may take a tour of the school. Find the kindergarten classrooms, bathrooms, the cafeteria, library and office.

Tell your child about the school schedule and activities. Your child may want to know:

- How he will get to school and how s/he will get home
- Drop off and pick up locations
- How long s/he will be in school
- What lunch will be like
- How to use the bathroom

If possible, introduce your child to other children who will be attending the same school. Let them play together.

If your school sends out packets to new students, point out facts of interest such as the teacher's name and room number. Practice saying the teacher's name. Practice other situations such as making friends and asking to go to the bathroom.



Listen to your child's concerns.

Let your child talk about feelings of doubt or nervousness.

Answer questions—even those you have answered before. Your child wants and needs to be reassured.

Let your child know it's OK to have questions and worries. For example, one of the more common concerns is whether the child will have friends and whether the child will be liked by the teacher and other students.

Discuss what you and the rest of the family will be doing while s/he is in school.



Involve your child in planning for school.

When shopping for school supplies or clothes, let your child take part in selecting them.

Organize school supplies.

Decide whether to buy or take lunch.

Prepare for a routine school day.

Discuss basic safety such as bus rules, drop-off/pick-up rules, traffic signs, and dealing with strangers.

About a week before school, begin the schedule that will be followed when school starts, especially getting to bed, getting up, dressing and eating breakfast.

If your child will be walking to school, take walks to school during the summer. Use the route you want your child to take. Point out traffic signs and landmarks along the way to help remember the route.

