



Preparing Your Child for the New School Year

Whether your child is starting school for the first time, changing schools, getting a new teacher, or simply switching from a summer routine to a school year routine, the start of a new school year can bring up a lot of emotions for both of you. Here are some ways you can help your child prepare for these big changes.

1. Validate Your Child's Feelings



Allow your child to express their feelings about school. You can use validating phrases such as, "I understand that." "I've felt that way before." "That's hard." You can also encourage them to keep talking with phrases like, "Tell me more." or "Help me understand more about that."

[Take a look at this list of validating phrases.](#)

2. Practice Ahead of Time

Familiarity

Ask your child's school if you can visit the campus ahead of time to walk around the grounds and play on the playground. (It would be great to do this several times if possible.) Ask for the names of a few children in the class so you can set up playdates over the summer. All of these experiences will help your child feel more comfortable on the first day.

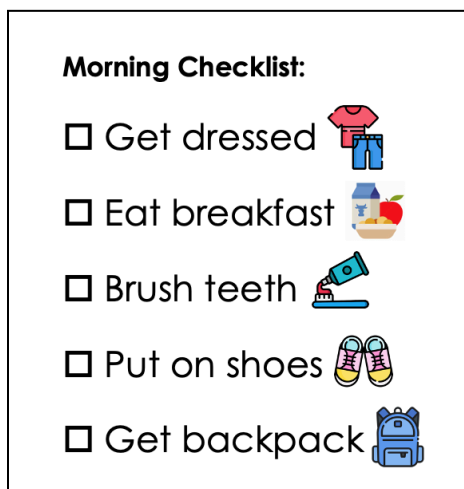


Separation

If this is your child's first school experience, it's important to practice separation. Use the childcare room at the gym or have your child spend some time at a friend's house to practice saying goodbye and coming back. If your child is struggling, start with just five minutes and build up from there.

New Routines

Start implementing the school morning routine well before school starts. Set an alarm for the new wake up time, and practice all the steps that you will do on a regular school day. Visual cues can be very helpful. Consider using a picture checklist for morning tasks or a picture calendar so your child can visualize the week.



Recommended Reading with Children

It can also be helpful for your child to see their situation reflected in stories. Here are a few book recommendations to read through with your child in preparation for the big day.



Bye Bye Time by Elizabeth Verdick

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst and Joanne Lew-Vriethoff

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson and Rafael López

First Day Jitters by Julie Danneberg and Judy Love

School's First Day of School by Adam Rex and Christian Robinson

Ruby Finds a Worry by Tom Percival

3. Lead by Example



Your child will pick up on your emotions. If you are nervous about the new school year (which is normal), make sure you have a place to share those that is not in front of your child. When talking about the new school year around your child, focus on positivity and model excitement. For example, "I can't wait to hear all about your first day!"

It may take some time for your child to get settled. Be in partnership with your child's teacher and the school to talk through ways to ease the transition for your child. The most important piece is for you to stay consistent with your child.

Have a safe and happy school year!