



School Readiness Tip Sheet

Adjusting to School

Your child's temperament plays a big part in how easy or hard it may be to adjust to school. For some children new situations create questions and feelings of anxiety. Other children love doing new things. Some children need longer to feel comfortable about separating from their parent. You can help make it easier for your child by being patient and positive. Seeing your child go on to school may be the hardest thing YOU have ever done. Your child's teacher understands this and will support you and your child during this time.

BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS:

- Set a positive tone as you prepare for school to begin. Have a "you can do this" attitude rather than an "I'm so worried about you" attitude. If you have concerns, talk to the teacher before school starts. Having your questions answered can help you feel more prepared to support your child.
- Visit the school with your child. Play on the playground, tour the classroom, use the bathroom, sit on the school bus, find out where to hang jackets and backpacks, etc.
- Review the daily routine and talk about it with your child. Make positive statements such as, "You get to go outside after lunch. I'll bet you'll have fun on the playground". The more comfortable your child becomes with what is going to happen during the school day, the faster your child will adjust.
- When children know ahead of time what is going to happen they can think about and get used to their feelings about it. Talk about different scenarios that may arise during the school day. Talk about whom your child can ask for help. "What will you do if you have to go to the bathroom?" "What if you need help zipping your jacket?" Help your child think through and problem solve what to do.

FIRST FEW WEEKS OF SCHOOL:

- Reduce morning stress. Prepare the night before by laying out clothes, packing the backpack and putting it by the door. Get a good night's sleep and get up a few minutes early so no one has to rush.
- It may help to let your child bring a special "lovey" (stuffed animal, small blanket) in his or her backpack. You could send a family photo for your child to keep at school. Having these items can help your child if he or she is upset.
- If your child is crying when you must leave, it is best to say goodbye and leave without hesitating. Remember that most children calm down in a matter of minutes. Your child's teacher will talk with you to plan what will work for you and your child.
- Stay calm and be enthusiastic. Talk about the school routine, classmates, different toys they might play with and that you cannot wait to hear about the day when they get home.

