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Parent Newsletter August 2026

Starting School with Confidence

Helping Your Child (and Yourself!) Get Ready for Preschool or Kindergarten

Starting preschool or kindergarten is a big milestone for the whole family. For many parents, it may be the first time their child is stepping into school as a learner outside the home. That can feel exciting, emotional, and full of questions all at once.

The good news is that children do not need to know everything before school begins. Some may already recognize letters and numbers, while others are still learning. What matters most are everyday skills like listening, taking turns, following directions, trying new things, and learning to handle big feelings.

Your job is not to make your child perfectly prepared. Your job is to help them feel safe, supported, and ready to explore.

What Matters Most in School Readiness

Many parents worry about letters, numbers, and colors. While those skills are helpful, teachers often say that social and emotional skills matter even more.

Children are building school readiness when they are learning how to:

- Follow simple directions
- Focus on an activity for a short time
- Take turns and play with other children
- Ask for help when needed
- Try new things, even when they feel unsure

Every child starts school with different strengths. One child may know many letters but struggle with transitions. Another may be very social but still learning to follow directions. Growth matters more than perfection.

Preschool and kindergarten are designed



to teach children. They are not expected to arrive already knowing everything.

When Big Feelings Show Up

Starting school often brings mixed emotions. Children may feel excited one moment and nervous the next. This is completely normal.

Let your child know it is okay to miss you and still enjoy school. When they share worries, try to listen first before trying to fix the feeling.

You might say:

- "It's okay to feel nervous. New things can feel big at first."
- "I know this feels hard right now, and I know you can do hard things."

Children build confidence when they feel understood.

Parent Tip: Label Everything

School items can easily get mixed up. Before the first day, write your child's name on backpacks, lunchboxes, water bottles, jackets, and other belongings. Even just initials can help if items get misplaced.

Getting Ready for School Checklist

Before school starts, try to:

- Practice a consistent bedtime and morning routine
- Read at least one book about school
- Practice lunch and bathroom skills
- Visit the school if possible
- Talk about what the first day will be like
- Plan a simple goodbye routine

Before the First Day: Making School Familiar

Children often feel more confident when they know what to expect.

In the weeks before school starts:

- Talk about what a school day might include (story time, art, playground, friends)
- Visit the school if possible
- Meet the teacher and explore the classroom or playground
- Let your child know it is okay to feel nervous

Reading books about school can also help children picture what to expect. Many libraries carry these favorites:

- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes* by Eric Litwin)
- *Llama Llama Misses Mama* by Anna Dewdney
- *Biscuit Goes to School* by Alyssa Satin Capucilli
- *David Goes to School* by David Shannon

After reading, try asking:

- “What do you think the character felt?”
- “What are you excited about at school?”

Skills to Practice Before School Starts

Small daily tasks help children feel confident and independent. Try practicing:

- Putting on shoes and jackets
- Cleaning up toys
- Washing hands
- Carrying a backpack

- Opening and closing containers

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Making Drop-Off Easier

A short, predictable goodbye helps children feel secure.

Try something simple like:

- A hug
- A special handshake
- A phrase like: “I love you. I’ll see you after school.”

Even if your child is upset, most children settle quickly once they join classroom activities. Teachers are experienced in helping children adjust.

Friendships Take Time

Some children talk about new friends right away. Others spend the first weeks watching, learning routines, and getting comfortable. Both are normal. Friendships grow over time.



After School: Connection Matters

Many children are tired after a full day of learning and socializing. They may seem emotional, clingy, or irritable during the first few weeks. This is a normal response to change.

Try to keep afternoons and evenings calm when possible.

Instead of asking “How was your day?” try more specific questions:

- What made you smile today?
- Who did you play with?
- What was something fun you did today?

If your child is not ready to talk right away, try again later during dinner, bath time, or bedtime.

Parents Have Feelings Too

The first day of school can bring pride, excitement, sadness, and worry—all at the same time.

Many parents find the first drop-off is harder for them than for their child. It can help to plan something for yourself afterward, like a walk, a phone call, or a quiet moment.

Showing calm and confidence helps your child feel calm and confident too.

Celebrate the Milestone

Small traditions can make the first day feel special:

- A favorite breakfast
- A photo at home or by the door
- A simple after-school treat

These moments help build positive memories.

First-Day Ready Checklist

- ☐ School forms completed (before first day or first week)
- ☐ Child's belongings labeled
- ☐ Lunchbox tested and easy to open
- ☐ Goodbye routine planned
- ☐ Camera ready for first-day photos
- ☐ Parent tissues packed—just in case!

Keep First-Day Photos Safe

First-day photos are a wonderful tradition, but it is important to protect your child's privacy.

Some signs include personal details like your child's full name, school, or teacher. This information can be seen by people you don't know.



To help keep your child safe:

- Keep signs simple (example: “First Day of Preschool”)
- Avoid including full name, school, or teacher
- Check your social media privacy settings
- Consider sharing only with close family or keeping photos private

You can celebrate the moment and protect your child at the same time.

A New Adventure Begins

The first day of school is the beginning of a new journey. There may be excitement, nervousness, and even tears—and all of it is part of learning and growing.

As you prepare backpacks, label jackets, and take photos, remember the most important thing you can give your child is your love and encouragement.

With time, routine, and support, your child will grow more confident each day—and so will you.