

Tips to help your child get ready for

PRESCHOOL

Talk about it - share as much information as you can with your child, what their teacher's name is, who might be in their class, the kinds of activities that they will do, what special items from home they will take with them, who will drop them off and pick them up every day. All of these are very important details to little ones. Make sure that you also take time to let them ask questions, the things that they are most worried about will probably be things that you didn't even think of, like what they will eat for lunch, or who will help them zip their coat when they go outside.

Visit the school - If you have the opportunity to visit before starting take advantage of it, and make sure to take your preschooler with you. It will help them know what to anticipate on the first day, and it will let you see how they interact with the materials, the teachers, and the other children.

Pick out something that your child can take to school - If they are allowed to bring a stuffed animal for nap let them pick out which one they want to take. If the teacher requests a family photo, ask your child to help you find one. These items will help make the transition smoother, and give your child something comforting when they get a little lonely.

Practice - Preschool is full of brand new situations that can be a little nerve-wracking for a child who has spent their life interacting with the same two or three adults. Help them practice what they will do when they don't like what is served for lunch. Make sure that they know how to use the bathroom, or who to ask for help. Teach them how to ask another child if they can play with them.

Interact with other children - Preschool is all about learning social skills, and interacting with other children can be really intimidating for a child who hasn't had a ton of practice. Make it a point to visit your library's story time, hang out at the splash pad with other families, and explore some family events in your town so that your child can experience interacting with other children while they are with you. This will let you see how they react to other little ones, and give you some idea of what you might want to talk about with them before they start preschool.

Give it time - Don't expect them to love everything about school on the very first day. Morning drop off might not go well, they might be sad, or report that they don't want to go back the next day. That's ok, this is new for all of you and it's going to take some getting used to. Be consistent with your routines and talk to the teacher about the things that your child enjoyed each day so that you can talk about those things and give them something to look forward to.

Tips for using this set:

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Share these tips with families that are new to your program – it's perfect for handing out at open house or during tours. This is also a great resource for any families you know who have started looking for child care or preschool programs.

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