



How Parents Can Help



Preparation for School

1. **Teach your child to be safe.** Be sure your child knows important information and can tell it to others who he or she knows and can be trusted to help. It is important to know:
 - ❖ First and last name
 - ❖ Street address
 - ❖ Parent's or guardian's names
 - ❖ Phone number
 - ❖ The safest route to and from school or the bus stop
2. **Discuss any fears.** It's natural for children to have some fears about school. Let your child talk to you about his or her fears and feelings. Be prepared to answer questions such as:
 - ❖ Who will help me at school?
 - ❖ Will the other children play with me?
 - ❖ What happens when I have to use the restroom?
 - ❖ Who's going to meet me after school?
3. **Visit the school with your child so your child can become familiar with it.** Contact the school to arrange for visitation.
4. **Talk with your child about school.** Make positive comments about the school. Your positive attitude will strongly influence your child. As specific questions about the day like, "Look at all the boys and girls painting in this classroom. What do you think you might paint in kindergarten?" Talk about all the fun things you remember doing as a child in kindergarten.
5. **Talk about the teachers and how they will help your child learn new things.** Encourage your child to look at the teacher as a wise friend toward whom children should be courteous. Explain to your child how everyday will be fun and exciting.

6. **Remember that the first day of school is a big event for children and parents.** Arrive on time. Don't stay too long. Be patient. Many young children are overwhelmed at first because they haven't had much experience in dealing with new situations. They may not immediately like school. Your child may cry and cling to you when you say goodbye each morning, but with support from you and the teacher, this can rapidly change. Be on time to pick up your child at the end of the school day.
7. **Help your child start each school day right.** Children need to be well rested. Children in kindergarten and first grade usually need 10-12 hours of sleep each night. Children learn better when they are well nourished. Allow time for breakfast and provide a healthy snack for recess.
8. **Dress your child appropriately for the weather.** Listen to the weather report in the morning before school. Choose appropriate outdoor clothing. Dress your child in layers if there's a possibility that the weather will change.
9. **Choose clothing that is simple, safe, sturdy and comfortable.** Children will be participating in active play, and need garments that allow for movement. Children will also be participating in activities such as painting and finger painting. Expect them to be dirty at times. Sturdy shoes with low heels, back straps and closed toes help protect the feet and allow for participation in running, jumping and playing on the playground. Label garments, lunchboxes and backpacks clearly with your child's name on the inside. Check with the school office to see if the school requires uniforms before purchasing school clothing.
10. **If you send money to school with your child for breakfast or lunch, put it in an envelope.** Write your child's name, the teacher's name and what the money is for on the envelope. Put the envelope in a safe pocket or backpack.
11. **Become an active member of the school.** Join your school's parent teacher group. Attend Back-to-School Night, Open House, and other programs. Get to know your child's teacher. Volunteer your help in the classroom. Contact your child's teacher or school principal if you have questions or concerns.
12. **In case of sickness, keep your child home.** Call his or her health-care provider for ailments such as sore throat, nausea, diarrhea, fever, skin rash and earache if they seem severe or last longer than a few days. Report the absence to the school. Call the school on the first day of the absence and send a note to the teacher when your child returns to school.
13. **Be active in your child's education.** Show interest in what happens each day at school. Make it a daily routine to ask your child about their favorite school activities and friends. Review all of their school work. Have daily conversation about school.