



## Preparing Your Child for School

- Before school begins, try to get your child familiar with the school – buildings, classrooms and playground. If your child knows what the school looks, sounds and even smells like this can help the first day's tension. The smell of the kids toilet at some schools can be very different and confronting for new young students.
- When talking with your child about school, do so in a positive way. Leave out the negative ideas and thoughts, and sound happy and excited when talking about school. Talk about good things such as new friends to make, new toys to play with and new games to play.
- Make sure your child knows in advance how they are getting to school and how they are getting home. If you pick them up, don't be late and don't change plans at the last minute.
- If your child will be catching the bus, go along the bus route with them before school starts.
- Leave yourself plenty of time to get to school. Being late will increase your child's anxiety
- Build up your child's confidence and self-esteem by telling them how proud you are of them. The more confident and secure a child feels, the less anxious they will be. To help build confidence, make sure your child has some basic skills, e.g. knowing how to tie shoelaces or get their new shoes on and off, knowing how to put on a raincoat, how to get their lunchbox open.
- If the school sends you some material before the start of the term, read it as it may contain information that could affect your child's first day e.g. school rules like 'no hat no play'.
- Explain to your child what will happen during their first day at school.
- Be aware that your child will want to dress the same as their new classmates. Keep this in mind and dress them accordingly.
- For the first day have a calm, happy and organised morning at home. Clothes and school bag should be laid out the night before so that the morning is smooth and hassle free. Avoid fights and arguments, or anything that will increase your child's anxiety.
- When at school and the teacher points out that it is time for you to leave, do so positively and quickly. If you hang around with tears in your eyes this will only upset your child further.
- Realise when your child comes home they will probably be very tired. This may continue for some weeks so make sure your child gets enough sleep and early dinners are good.
- When first starting school children often don't eat their lunch. Ensure they have plenty of time to eat breakfast and pack plenty of healthy nutritious snack foods in their lunchbox.
- To begin with, children often don't use the toilet at their new school. It would be helpful to make sure they go to the toilet before they go to school and when they come home.

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