

First Day of Kindergarten Guide

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Starting Kindergarten is a Big Milestone!

The first day of kindergarten is exciting—and sometimes nerve-wracking—for both children and parents. With thoughtful preparation, you can help your child feel confident and excited about this new adventure. This guide provides a timeline, checklists, and strategies for a smooth transition.

Remember: Some anxiety is normal! Your calm, positive attitude is your child's biggest source of confidence.

Preparation Timeline

4 Weeks Before

- ☐ Visit the school and walk around the building
- ☐ Meet the teacher if possible (open house)
- ☐ Practice the morning routine wake-up time
- ☐ Read books about starting school
- ☐ Talk positively about kindergarten

2 Weeks Before

- ☐ Practice self-care skills (bathroom, hand washing)
- ☐ Practice opening lunch containers and snack packages
- ☐ Set up a consistent bedtime routine
- ☐ Arrange playdates with future classmates if possible
- ☐ Let child help choose school supplies

1 Week Before

- ☐ Do a practice run of the morning routine
- ☐ Practice the drop-off route and timing
- ☐ Lay out first day outfit together
- ☐ Pack backpack with supplies
- ☐ Create a goodbye ritual

Night Before

- ☐ Set out clothes and backpack
- ☐ Prepare lunch/snack if needed
- ☐ Do calm bedtime activities
- ☐ Talk about what to expect tomorrow
- ☐ Reassure your child you'll be back

Sample Morning Routine

Practice this routine for at least a week before school starts. Adjust times based on your school's start time.



6:30 AM

Wake up



6:35 AM

Use
bathroom,
wash face



6:45 AM

Get dressed



7:00 AM

Eat
breakfast



7:20 AM

Brush teeth



7:30 AM

Put on
shoes, grab
backpack



7:40 AM

Leave for
school

★ **Tip:** Build in extra time the first week. Everything takes longer when it's new!



What to Pack Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Backpack (labeled with name) * | ☐ Change of clothes (labeled) * |
| ☐ Lunch box and water bottle * | ☐ Comfort item (if allowed) |
| ☐ Family photo for cubby | ☐ Required school supplies * |
| ☐ Any forms or paperwork * | ☐ Medications (with office) |

* Essential items

Conversation Starters

Use these prompts to talk about kindergarten in the weeks leading up to the first day:

"What are you excited about?"

Build anticipation

"What questions do you have?"

Address concerns

"Who might you play with?"

Think about friendships

"What will you do if you need help?"

Problem-solving

"How will we say goodbye?"

Create ritual

"What will you tell me about your day?"

Set expectations

First Day Drop-Off Tips

✅ Do This

- ✓ Keep goodbyes short and positive
- ✓ Use your planned goodbye ritual
- ✓ Express confidence in your child
- ✓ Tell them when you'll be back
- ✓ Trust the teacher to help

❌ Avoid This

- ✗ Linger or show anxiety
- ✗ Sneak away without saying goodbye
- ✗ Make promises you can't keep
- ✗ Say "Don't cry" or "Be brave"
- ✗ Come back to check on them

Create a Goodbye Ritual

A special goodbye routine helps children feel secure. Choose one that takes less than 30 seconds:



Secret Handshake



Butterfly Kisses



Magic Heart Transfer



Three Hugs + High Five



Whisper "I love you"



Draw heart on palm



Special wave



Fist bump + explosion

Our goodbye ritual:

After School: Better Questions to Ask

Instead of "How was school?" (which usually gets "fine"), try these specific questions:

- "What made you laugh today?"
- "What was the hardest thing you did?"
- "What did you play at recess?"
- "Was anyone kind to you today?"
- "Who did you sit with at lunch?"
- "Did anything surprise you?"
- "What's one new thing you learned?"
- "What are you looking forward to tomorrow?"

Notes & Important Information

Teacher\'s Name:

Classroom Number:

School Start Time:

Pick-up Time: