



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

## **Preparing Your Child for Their First Day of Kindergarten\***

1. Talk with your child about what to expect during a typical school day, including classroom time, lunch and snacks, recess and bathroom breaks. The more your child knows about the details, the less anxious he or she will feel about the first days of school.
2. Read books with your child about starting kindergarten. Librarians can often offer suggestions.
3. Rehearse for the big day by practicing all the activities that will happen at school. Do a test-run of the new routine:
  - a. Wake up at the time necessary in order to give your child plenty of time to get ready.
  - b. Plan and fix a healthy breakfast. Teach your kindergartner how to help with this.
  - c. Lay out clothes the night before and make sure zippers, buttons and ties are able to be easily fastened.
  - d. If your child takes a school bus, walk to the bus stop and talk about boarding and where to sit. If you will drive them to school, talk about landmarks along the way.
  - e. Pack a lunch for both of you and sit down with your children and practice opening things together. If you will be sending a lunch, make sure it is nutritious food that they like and can open. Juice boxes, fruit cups and zip lock bags can frustrate your child if they haven't had practice. Remind them to ask for help if needed. Teachers and lunch staff will be there to help.
4. Reassure your child about what kinds of activities will happen after the day is over. If they are going to after-school child care, talk about the activities and schedule during this time.
5. Give your child a family picture of you to keep in their pocket or backpack, and reassure them about what time you will be back to pick them up.
6. Spend extra time on the first day of school, but do not "drag out" saying goodbye. Send them off with a reassuring hug and kiss!
7. Kindergartners sometimes have accidents. Pack an extra pair of clothes for your child and bring it on or before the first day of class.
8. Getting and staying involved in your child's school activities sends a message that education and school is important. Speak with your child's teacher regularly, and if possible, participate in your school's PTO/PTA.
9. Most importantly, celebrate and enjoy this milestone with your child!

*\*Adapted from several sources.*