

STEPS TO SUCCESS

Routine

Always have a well established routine. Walk your child into the classroom. Get them settled. Help them to put their lunch boxes and jackets in their cubbies.

Say Good-bye

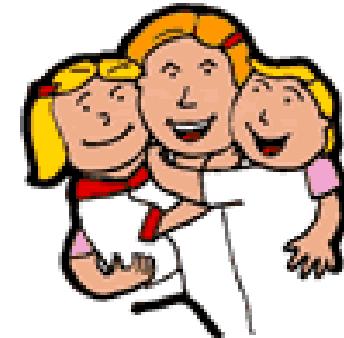
Don't just leave. Give them a hug, clearly say good-bye and then leave firmly.

Warn of changes to Routine

If you are going to stop at the grocery store on the way to school explain this to your child. If there is a holiday tell them about it in advance.



Starting school for the first time can be a highly stressful experience for children. Whether your child is entering full time preschool or a part time program, proper preparation will ensure a smooth transition.



How To Prepare Children For School

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GOOD-BYE & HELLO

PREPARE YOURSELF

Plan your part of the adjustment process. It can be just as heartbreaking for you, as your child, when you separate. Are you emotionally prepared? How is your child going to react to the separation?

Touch base with the Director or teachers before the actual enrollment date. Do a trial run and spend half an hour at the school, a few days before the official start date. Make contingency plans for work or other activities that you have planned if things become difficult on the first day or first few days. How will you handle this situation? Think about what foods to prepare and how it should be packaged. Talk to other parents for useful hints.

DOCUMENTATION

Have you completed all documentation for your child? Physicians Reports, vaccination cards, emergency contact information and other forms must be completed. The school will not admit your child if all paper work is not completed. You could be in for a big disappointment if you turn up without having completed all your paperwork. Review all documentation with the admissions administrator before the start date.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

Get your child involved in laying out his or her clothing for the school day. Pack a favorite toy or pacifier that might give your child some comfort. Take a picture of the family to hang in the child's cubby at school. A picture can give great comfort to a child.

THE DRIVE TO SCHOOL & WORK

How long does it take, to drive your child to school? Have you made adjustments for traffic and parking at that time? If you are working, how long does it take to get to work from the school? How long does it take you, to get to the school and pick up your child?

PREPARE YOUR CHILD

Children may scream, cry or cling when you drop them off at preschool. This *separation anxiety*, which is quite normal, can in some cases create an extremely difficult situation for you, not to mention embarrassment. Don't be scared of this.

TRIAL VISIT

Do a trial run at the school, even for a few minutes. Keep calm. Don't panic. It is a natural part of your child's development and in time they will get used to it.



TRIAL SEPARA-TION



Another method is to practise saying good-bye. Get one of your relatives to look after your child. This trial separation will teach your child the concept of separation from you.

Play a game of hide and seek. Subconsciously this helps your child grasp the concept of leaving and coming back.

INTRODUCTION TO TEACHERS & FRIENDS

If your child is introduced to the teacher or Director of the school before the actual start date, it will give the child a familiar face to identify with. If you know one of the children at school, arrange a play date, so that your child can see and take comfort in a familiar face.



THE GOOD-BYE ROUTINE

Saying Good-Bye can be one of the most difficult things for your child. They cling to you, cry, scream or cause a mini riot.

The trick to an effective Good-Bye is to follow some simple steps. Always say Good-bye. Do not prolong the Good-bye. Never slip out without saying Good-bye. Tell your child exactly what time they will be picked up and follow through on the timing. If you think you might get late, tell them about that possibility. Give your child a kiss, a hug or a wave when leaving.

After a few days you may discover that child's crying at your leaving only lasts a few minutes. Children get used to the process very quickly. But a consistent routine is the key to your success.



THE HELLO ROUTINE

After a hard day at work, parents can often be tired and irritated. The important thing is to put aside your problems and pay attention to the needs of your child. Follow a consistent pick up schedule, especially at the beginning. Children need to know that you will be back to pick them up at the time you promised.

Some children will run into your arms, give you a hug and tell you about their day. Others will see you and carry on with an activity they have been doing. Give them a few minutes. Stand back a little bit. Pick up your child's lunch box and other materials they have using and firmly indicate that you will leave within a specified time period.

After you get in the car, listen to your child. Most children want to tell you about what happened in their day. Also tell them about your day, in simple terms that they can understand. Kids want to know about your day too.