



Tips to Prepare Kids for the Big Day

Remember Routines. Family routines tend to slide in the summer—after all, what’s summer without crazy bedtimes, a popsicle habit, and wearing swimsuits for days on end?—and it can be hard to readjust come fall. Well before school starts, focus on choosing sleep, exercise, healthy foods, and time together. By practicing school bedtimes a week before school starts so that the new routine is established.

Get Ready! Don’t underestimate the fun and importance of new stuff for the big day. With younger kids, a bag full of school supplies, a new backpack and a few new items of clothing tend to gear them up without any further encouragement. For an older child, this may be the time to give the thumbs-up to that must-have trend item, especially if he or she has earned some money over the summer to pay for it.

Show Them the Way. If they are new to the school, show your child their classroom, what entrance and exit to use and where the bathroom is located. If he/she’s taking the bus, visit the bus stop location and explain how to get on and off, especially if it’s the first time. Show them the drop off and pick up spot at school, too—if you’re not sure where it will be, call the school ahead of time to find out. Some schools will allow you to take a tour during the summer and arrange to meet the teacher. “This is your school, your gymnasium, your lunch room...”

Prepare the Teacher. Let your child’s teacher know specifics about behavior or health issues that may concern your child. It helps the teacher to know your child better.

Talk, Talk, Talk. Try to think of all the positive things that they like about school talk about them as much as possible. Ask about friends they haven’t seen over the summer. Never mention homework or teachers they weren’t crazy about. Also, reading about school stories can get them ready for what to expect. Find reviewed book suggestions in Back to school books. And for the younger kids, it’s a good idea to explain the role of the teacher to your child. “Encourage the child to speak up and let the teacher know if they’re having problems. They need to know they can, and should, talk to the teacher.”

Be Organized. Ease back-to-school anxiety by being prepared. Help your child to lay out her clothes and pack her backpack the night before. Be sure to include a healthy lunch and a snack that your child can open and eat on his own.

Take It Easy. Preparation is great—but don’t go overboard. You can make back-to-school too big a deal! You’re the best judge of when your child needs reassurance, and how to go about giving it. “In the end, remember that it’s normal to feel a little nervous or fluttery about that first week back. Everyone, including the teachers, feel like that.